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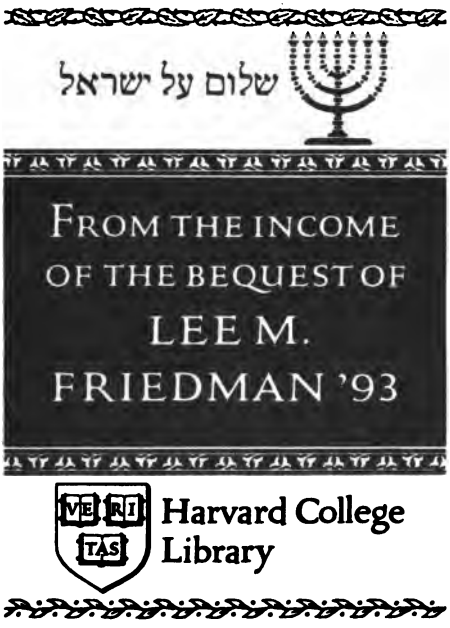

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TRUTH IN RELIGION

AND OTHER SERMONS

TRUTH IN RELIGION

AND OTHER SERMONS

DELIVERED AT THE SERVICES OF THE
JEWISH RELIGIOUS UNION

BY

CLAUDE G. MONTEFIORE

London
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Friedman

TO THE MEMORY OF

SIMEON SINGER

(BORN 1848: DIED 1906)

THIS BOOK IS

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INSCRIBED

PREFACE

THE twenty Sermons here collected were all delivered at the services of the Jewish Religious Union in London within the last two or three years. They are printed without any changes except a few merely verbal corrections. If any friendly sympathiser or friendly opponent wants to know the sort of things I say, or the sort of Judaism I seek to teach, at the services of the Union, he can know it by glancing at, or better, by reading, this book. In a few cases I have ventured to print consecutively sermons which treat of the same subject from somewhat different points of view.

Though I am President of the Union, neither the Committee nor the members are responsible for anything that I have said. If any single word could express that purpose of the Union upon which all those who work for it are most agreed, this word would, I think, be "Liberty." We have constituted, so far as we can, a free Jewish pulpit, though by no

means all of those who would wish to avail themselves of this pulpit are free to do so. If what I have just said about Liberty and the Union be true, it follows that we are not united together by any authoritative or official creed, whether old or new. Yet it would, I think, be also true to say that a large section of our Union share with their President in a common hope, and are stirred by a common ideal. One faith unites them, if not in details, yet in essentials. In other words, the conception of Judaism or the kind of Jewish teaching, too inadequately sketched out in these sermons, though in one sense purely personal and individual, does bind a certain number of Jews and Jewesses together, and gives them such religious strength and inspiration as they may happen to possess. These, my truest colleagues, whether within or without the Union, I trust may find in this book some few hints and suggestions towards the development and confirmation of their Jewish faith.

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I

"Great is truth, and strong above all things."
—1 Esdras iv. 41.

This famous phrase comes from the curious story about the three young men and their "sentences" at the court of King Darius, in the apocryphal First Book of Esdras. The subject of Truth in matters of religion, about which I would wish to speak to you to-day, raises many delicate and difficult problems.

Truth stands at the meeting point of the moral and the intellectual world, and partakes of the character of both. It is not the best loved of the virtues; and yet it is one of the noblest, as it is, perhaps, the hardest of them all. It needs courage and resolution and strength of will: it must be loved for its own sake, or it will not be practised. The virtue of compassion or generosity is stimulated by emotion. But truth often appeals to the mind alone. It is one of the worst evils of persecution that it tends to lessen the capacity for truth, and the love of truth, among the

persecuted. The hunted animal naturally desires to deceive its hunter. There is therefore no virtue which Jews should regard as more important; there is none which, in all its forms, is more incumbent alike upon rich and poor, upper class and lower class, the man who works with his hands and the man who works with his head. There is no virtue which should give greater anxiety to teachers of every grade and kind, as to how they may best help to develop it, and the love of it, in the minds and hearts of their pupils. Deceit and lying and prevarication in every form are vices which not only corrupt those who are their victims, but do an immense evil to the community. The Jews are a sober race, it is vaunted. Let us see to it that a far higher praise may be rendered us: "they are a truthful race." In that Divine holiness, which we are bidden to imitate, Truth takes a foremost place: God is true. "Mighty in goodness and truth," he is called in the Pentateuch. And in many places in the Scriptures the utmost stress is laid upon truth of speech and truth of conduct: "Ye shall not lie one to another"; "Speak ye every man the truth with his neighbour": such verses, and commands such as these, abound.

And coming nearer to the special aspect of Truth, about which I want to speak to-day —that aspect too is Jewish, and even akin to

the special genius of our religion. For God is true not merely in his fidelity, but true because he is the source and condition of knowledge; and knowledge is only another term for truth. If man without righteousness is inconceivable, he is also inconceivable without knowledge. If love is the supremest endowment of man, only second to love stands truth. High up among the prayers and blessings of the *Amidah*, we read: "Thou favourest man with knowledge and teachest mortals understanding. O favour us with knowledge, understanding, and discernment. Blessed art thou, O Lord, the gracious giver of knowledge." We might equally say, and the meaning would be the same, "Blessed art thou, O Lord, the gracious giver of truth."

Hence we see that to those who conscientiously use this prayer, to those who believe that God is the Source of truth as well as of goodness, there can be no truth which is *not* Divine, there can be no falsehood which *is* Divine. There can be no opposition between Science and Religion, for Science must be a part of Religion. Whatever laws of Nature science ascertains and proves, are also the laws of God. If any doctrine of religion is in conflict with an ascertained law of science, that doctrine cannot be true; therefore it cannot be religious. It is no longer religious to believe it; it is, on the contrary, irreligious,

for God is true, and the source of truth. If the statements in the sacred books of any religion are in antagonism with the proved doctrines of science, those statements are erroneous: held in good faith till science had shown their error, they can no longer be held in good faith when science has proved them false. Thus, to take the simplest instance which nowadays nobody minds, science has shown that the time, the order, and the manner of the earth's origin and man's as related in the first chapter of Genesis, or again as related in the second chapter of Genesis (for the two chapters contradict each other), are inaccurate. Earth and man did not so come into being, but quite otherwise. Therefore, because God is true and the source of truth, it is scientific truth, because it *is* the Truth, which is here Divine, and not the Book of Genesis. It is Science, and not the Pentateuch, which we must here believe. Other examples will easily present themselves to your minds.

Do not let us be unhappy. The truth can never be wrong; the truth can never be bad; the truth is Divine. What is of God is good. There can never be a divorce between righteousness and truth; for in the perfect Unity of God, righteousness and truth are eternally one.

On a lower level of certitude than the

ascertainments of Natural Science are the ascertainments of Historical Science. Fundamentally there is, however, no difference between them, for truth is one. A branch of historical science is what is known as criticism, or the "higher criticism." There are many conclusions of criticism which are almost as certain as the demonstrated conclusions of science. Such, for instance, are the conclusions that the Pentateuch was not written by one man, and that of the events it records, some are not historic. Or, again, the conclusion that the laws in the Pentateuch were not all written at one time, and that they reflect different ages and points of view. Though, every now and then, some honest, if prejudiced, writer may dispute these conclusions, we may, for all practical purposes, believe them to be as certain as the pronouncements of geology upon the history of the earth. And they, too, if true, are divine, for God is true and the source of truth, and there is no truth which is not God's truth, and there is no truth which at the last shall not prevail. "Great is truth, and mighty above all things."

Now most historical religions like our own, which are connected with certain sacred books, and have constructed beliefs about these books, are compelled, from time to time, to revise these beliefs in the light of

science and of truth. For these books contain a number of scientific and historic statements; they are literature; they have contents and style, matter and form. Therefore, apart from their moral and religious truths, they come before the bar of natural science and of history, and of what we may call literary science as well. Science has to pronounce whether the statements made in those books about natural objects are true or false; history has to say whether the statements made about persons and events are true or false, and literary science has to give judgment, so far as it rightly can, about dates and authorships. Other branches of knowledge, such as comparative religion and law, will also have to be called in and to deliver their verdicts. There is no appeal from these verdicts; that is to say, they may be liable to revision, but only by other, newer judges in the same court; there is no higher court than science, or history, or criticism, in their own province and subject-matter.

If, then, the statements made in the books, or the beliefs which have been constructed about the books, are shown to be inaccurate, a time of difficulty or stress is probable, during which the outer wrappings of religion must be reshaped to fit the newer truth. I call them outer wrappings, for the things which fall to science and history and criticism

to settle and determine can never belong to the innermost verities of either religion or morality. They leave God and Love, Righteousness and the Source of Righteousness, where they were and where they will be. But articles of religion which happen to deal with matters that primarily belong to science, history, and criticism to decide, may need recasting, or even revoking, in the light of the decisions of history, criticism, and science.

In such a condition of things, in such a difficult time, Judaism is now. Leaving the details for a possible future occasion, let me confine myself to certain preliminary generalities and reflections.

First of all, it is a time for charity and gentleness, as well as for insight and open-mindedness. Though the matters which need revision and restatement do not belong to the inner sanctuary of religion, though God and the Soul are left untouched, they are not unimportant. They are mixed up with the outward worship of the Synagogue; they are connected with many a form and observance; they deal with the historic aspects and relations of our own particular faith. Moreover, truth and falsehood are often woven together closely; it is not easy to disentangle the threads; rude hands may harm the valuable and the true in seeking to set them free from

what is inaccurate and perishing. And the subjects in dispute do not merely belong to the province of the mind; they touch the affections and the emotions. Men do not always see clearly when their feelings are involved. Religion, in all its parts, has to do with the heart as well as with the head. If it does *not* appeal to the heart, it loses half its wonderful power. The prejudices of the heart—and the heart is often very conservative—must not be forgotten or ignored.

On the other hand, the men of the heart must also remember the needs and the troubles of the men of the head. They must remember that, in the long run, religion cannot be based upon error, that God is the author of knowledge: "Great is truth, and mighty above all things."

The condition of affairs in our own religious community is not without alarming elements. In official Judaism, the newer truths of science, history, and criticism seem largely ignored. The young are usually taught, and, so far as I know, our budding ministers are usually trained, as they might have been trained and taught eighty years ago, before Darwin or Colenso. This is surely serious. The divorce between officialism and truth is becoming greater in each decade, and the results of that divorce are also becoming more serious. Specious arguments are used

about not disturbing the innocent faith of uneducated persons, about preserving unity in Judaism, about not making bad blood, about letting sleeping dogs lie, about letting error destroy itself, about the urgent practical questions which beset and menace the community, about the sovereign virtue of peace, about the immense need of outward forms, about the needful illusions in the education of children, about all things under heaven except one. And that one omitted argument or subject is: What do we owe to truth? Is not truth allied to righteousness; is not knowledge allied to God? Has truth, in the long run, ever failed to come by her own? "Great is truth, and mighty above all things!"

No religion, in the long run, will be able to resist the transformations and readjustments which Truth may decree. But the longer the process of transformation and readjustment is postponed, the greater the danger. The longer the ministers of a religion are not allowed officially to speak about the newer conquests of truth, the greater will be the number of those who will become alienated from or indifferent to the religion of their fathers, the larger the number of those who will think Judaism a mere religious curiosity and anachronism, incapable of change or transformation. Unity

at the cost of knowledge, peace at the cost of truth, are dangerous gifts.

Greatly do our official leaders deceive themselves if they think that the results of science, history, and criticism will remain unknown, if only official Judaism and all ministers and teachers of religion keep silence, and look the other way. You cannot build a ring fence round the community, and expect that the light of knowledge and truth and free discussion will never penetrate the barrier. But, on the contrary, official silence has the opposite effect to what, I conclude, is intended. The results of science and history and criticism are not kept away from Jews of either West End or East End, but they often reach them in a distorted, exaggerated form. Instead of enlightenment, you get indifference; instead of a living Judaism adapted or readjusted to truth, you get a dull apathy or atheism. Are unity and peace worth having, even though we have these things too? If the results of science and history and criticism are not taught by the friends of Judaism, they will be taught by its foes. And they, in the words of the homely German proverb, will pour out the child with the bath. The essential truth will be evicted with the inaccurate wrapping.

But why do I say all these things here?

Our official leaders and institutions will not be affected; they will not change their methods or open their eyes for anything that may be said in this place. It might even be argued that their rigidity will be stiffened, and their eyes the more firmly closed. Well, I say these things, in the first place, perhaps, because they are very near to me, because I feel them so deeply, and have thought of them so long; because I see the need and the dangers, and can but from time to time call attention to them, whether any give heed or no. The impulse and the duty of speech are sometimes borne in upon us, even though for the time being there are few or none who may believe the warning and follow the argument. The prophet of old was moved to speak, though he realised that the immediate results of his speech would be as if God had said to him: "Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not!" Nevertheless the prophet was justified in the end. But there is another reason why I say these things, and say them in this place.

The fault, the evil, are partly ours. It is we, the outsiders, and not only the officials and the leaders, who are to blame. It is we who too readily let things slide, and do not care. It is we who are content to be slack,

apathetic, critical, or sceptical, but who are not keen enough, and not devoted enough, to bring about a gradual change for the better, a development from within. Among other possibilities and objects, our Union can serve the cause of truth. We have, for all practical purposes, a free pulpit; truth, as each preacher sees her, may be freely spoken from this place. Here it can be shown that Judaism need not shirk or fear the ascertained results of science, history, and truth. Here it can be shown that Judaism need be no anachronism or curious survival, but a real, living, religious force, which can speak with confidence and look forward with hope. Would that I had a voice that could penetrate into every Jewish home where apathy or scepticism prevails! I would urge all that latent power to join with me in battle for the cause of Judaism. I would tell those men and women who have lost faith or interest in Judaism, that Judaism need not veil her face in the presence of truth. I would weld them together into a power which would gradually exert its influence even upon the most official presentments of Judaism, so that the light of truth should, here too, be allowed to penetrate and transform. But none of these effects can be produced, no beginning can even be made, by mere negation and absten-

tion. Yes; truth is mighty and will prevail, but we are not, for that, to fold our hands and sit in idleness. Righteousness shall prevail, but we are not, for that, allowed to be unrighteous. There are many aspects and embodiments of truth; it is for us to look after the Jewish aspect and the Jewish embodiment. To deny error is wholly inadequate. We must affirm truth. Do not credit those who say that, if criticism be true, it is only a shadowy, eviscerated Judaism which can remain. Are God and his Unity shadows? Are the soul and its destiny unimportant? Is the union of morality and religion a small thing? Is not the mission of Israel to stand fast for the theistic explanation of the world, to stand fast for the living God, the essence and the cause of righteousness and truth, and their perfect and eternal harmony? Is this a small, feeble, shadowy thing? There would indeed be no interest in asking for the gradual removal of the erroneous, if one did not believe that the erroneous hindered the diffusion and victory of the true. It would not matter that official Judaism did not freely admit the teachings of science, history, and criticism, if there was, and could be, no higher Judaism which *can* admit them, and be Judaism still. If *then* we were to see many drifting away, we should mind it less, for we should say

it was inevitable. But what if it be *not* inevitable, if Truth and Judaism can still march forward hand in hand? It is for you, it is for us all, to serve him who is the God of truth as well as the God of righteousness. Let us not be false to the obligations of this service, so that we too may have the right to say, and so that Judaism may thank us for saying it: "Great is truth, and mighty above all things."

II

"Ye are my witnesses."—Isaiah xliii. 10.

"There is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak."—Eccles. iii. 7.

Why do I bring these two passages, extracted from such wholly different authors, written at such widely different periods, here together? The reason will become clear to you as I proceed.

No statement is more customary, and none more accepted, than the statement that Judaism is not a missionary religion. It is frequently put forward by non-Jews as a proof that Judaism has no claim to be regarded as anything more than a tribal or national faith. Christianity, Mohammedanism, Buddhism—these are, it is alleged, world or universal religions, which have sought, and seek, to expand, and which are all capable of expanding. Judaism was, is, and ever will be, the narrow religion of one petty race. But what is regarded by the one side, if not as a reproach, yet, at least, as a mark of inferiority and an anachronism, is oddly enough regarded

by the other side as a merit and a distinction. That Jews court no proselytes, that Judaism does not seek to convert others to its own ranks, are favourite statements, I might say, favourite boasts, among Jews themselves. What others consider a stigma, we apparently consider a merit.

Are you and I sufficiently able to free ourselves from prejudice so as to see things as they are? Can we with profit consider upon which side the truth lies, or whether, as is not improbable, there is some truth on both?

I hardly know whether I need remind you that the merit or the stigma—whichever it be—of seeking and making no proselytes was not applicable to Judaism at every period of its history. At one time Judaism was undoubtedly a missionary religion, and large sections of Jews were eager to make proselytes. Nor were they unsuccessful. There is no doubt that in the three hundred years, from, say, 250 B.C. to 50 A.D., a large number of Gentiles became converts to Judaism. I cannot enter here into this most interesting chapter of our religion. Nor did the converts suddenly cease after the foundation of Christianity. They still continued, though, doubtless, in diminished numbers. Even when Christianity became the state religion of the whole Roman Empire, the attractive power of Judaism did not completely disappear.

The Church and the orthodox Emperors had to pass the severest and cruellest laws against all Jewish proselytism and against all converts to Judaism. Under the strain and compulsion of these laws conversions gradually ceased. The danger, both for converters and for converted, became too great. The party or section among the Jews which, all along, had been more or less opposed to conversion and missionary enterprise, was strengthened by the bitter logic of facts, and thus very gradually Judaism shrank back, or was forced to shrink back, into its own shell, and to relinquish every attempt at expansion and enlargement. A virtue was made of necessity, and various arguments were found to prove that Judaism was not, and should not be, a missionary religion.

So for generations things have stood, and so they stand to-day. The Jews openly boast that they make no active effort whatever to disseminate their religion, that Judaism does not seek or desire proselytes, that it is not a missionary faith.

Let us, first of all, consider whether, *a priori* and in the abstract, it is really a thing of which any religion may fitly boast that it is not a missionary faith.

It is to be presumed that the adherents of any religion believe that their religion is the truest and the best. The orthodox members

of any faith, more especially, hold that their religion is not only true, but wholly and perfectly true, and that any other religion, so far as it differs from theirs, is imperfect and false. They consider that truth is a good and precious thing in itself, and that they are fortunate and happy in possessing it. The believers of most religions, moreover, believe that religious truth and moral goodness are very near partners, very close allies, so that, other things being equal, the truer your faith, the better and deeper your righteousness. On this ground, again, they rejoice in their possession of truth, and their joy is reasonable and legitimate.

Is it then to be wondered at that the adherents of most great religions are anxious that others should share in the truth which they themselves enjoy? Is it wonderful that they desire to extend the borders of truth, and to make the skirts of error more narrow? Is it unreasonable, if God be the author of truth and the lover of righteousness, that they should think that they are doing his will and serving him rightly when they make the votaries of truth more numerous, when they seek to give to the largest number of men the chance to live the highest possible life? The purest knowledge of God is theirs; the best and truest way to serve him is known only to them. Are they not thoroughly

justified in wishing to diffuse and make known this precious knowledge, this consummate boon, as widely as possible? Is it not selfishness to wrap up their jewel in a napkin, and to say that none shall see its glory but themselves? Will they dare to say that truth and goodness are the prerogative of a single race, and that others neither can nor may be admitted to the inner shrine where God is most fitly worshipped and most truly known?

The answers to these questions are plain and obvious. It is *not* surprising that every religion, which is more than a mere tribal cult or national worship, should seek to propagate what it believes to be the highest truth, leading to the noblest life. And this desire can be quite independent of, and can legitimately survive, the belief that true faith is necessary for salvation after death. For truth and righteousness are ends in themselves, quite apart from their effect upon the human soul in its destiny beyond the grave.

Hence the strange thing is *not* that Christianity and Mohammedanism attempt to enlarge the number of their adherents, but that Judaism, if it be not a mere tribal religion, does not. But no monotheistic creed can be tribal. If there be one God and one God only, as all the great Theistic religions affirm,

then all men are his children, and if all men are his children, it is surely desirable that they should know as much about their Father as possible, that they should all worship him most purely, and that, through the truest knowledge of him and of his laws, they should live the best and noblest lives.

How, then, can any monotheistic creed be *proud* that it is not a missionary faith, that it does not gladly and eagerly welcome newcomers within its fold? Why are its fences high, its gates barred? Why is admission grudgingly granted? Why are not the barriers thrown down?

We have already seen how from sheer pressure of necessity Judaism ceased to be a missionary faith. And just as the Jews were forced in certain countries to wear a distinctive garb, and as, when the compulsion to wear it ceased, they nevertheless clung to the dress as if it were a part of their creed, so we have seen that when the outside ban upon all missionary effort was largely removed, the very desire for expansion, the very approval of it, had wholly passed away.

But when self-consciousness gradually awoke, when in the middle ages the Jews began to philosophise about their religion, and when in modern times they made comparisons and heard them made, theories were constructed to account for and to justify the

fact that Judaism, though more than a tribal, was yet not a missionary faith.

To some of these theories I now invite your attention. One of the first, perhaps, was the theory of Maimonides. It was that Christianity and Mohammedanism were divinely intended to be the stepping-stones to Judaism. They were, so to say, to do the rough work, and pave the way. Then, in the fulness of time, the doctrines of Judaism would be universally accepted. The jump from Paganism to Judaism was too great: the two daughter religions were intended to provide the bridge. Maimonides knew little history, yet, even so, his theory is not without its value and its truth. But it is totally inadequate. For, as a matter of fact, Judaism had been well able to proselytise successfully before Christianity was founded, and if it be said that the conception of God in Judaism is more abstract and purer than the conception of God in Christianity, and is therefore harder and less attractive, this argument, which at best is dubious, is inapplicable to the case of Islam. It may, however, be properly interjected here that if the theory of Maimonides be regarded as true or as part of the truth, it ill becomes those Jews who accept it to laugh at, or show contempt for, the missionary efforts of Christianity in the heathen world. For these efforts, according

to Maimonides' theory, are divinely intended and ordained. And, in any case, it seems to me strange that the desire to reveal to others the highest religious truth, which, as we all believe, must produce the highest moral righteousness, should evoke a smile or a jest; it is strange that when men and women give up years of hardship and self-sacrifice to the realisation of this desire, their labours should be regarded by anybody, whether within or without their own body, with superciliousness or derision. But I pass from this observation — and what I have condemned as strange and infelicitous may be largely explained from all that Jews have had to suffer at the hands of Christians, and from the too often immoral methods of the conversionists —to a second and more modern theory.

It is argued that Judaism teaches that salvation after death does not depend upon what you believe, but upon what you do. It teaches that justification is not of faith, but of works. Over and over again is that solitary sentence of the Talmud — an excellent sentence in its way—trotted out and made to do duty, "The righteous of all nations shall have a share in the world to come." But this theory, too, is very inadequate, and it is, moreover, becoming rapidly out of date. To begin with, you cannot separate a man's faith from his actions. For actions, to some

extent at least, are dominated and controlled by faith. Justification, if such a thing be, is not by faith and not by works, but by something which is above them and includes them, and that is character. Not what you *do*, not what you *believe*, is, so far as you are concerned, the most essential thing, but what you *are*. And what you are is an amalgam of both works and faith. And, secondly, the reason why it is a right and proper thing, and a good desire, to propagate and extend your faith is not merely because of the effect of right faith or of error upon your soul after death. The idea that error is moral turpitude is foolish and exploded. The soul of an Australian savage may deserve and may receive, so far as we can tell, a far gentler treatment after death than the soul of many a Christian and many a Jew. That is no longer the point. The point is, as we have already seen, that truth and the higher righteousness which truth produces, or can produce, are ends in themselves, quite apart from any question of rewards and punishments after death. They are ends in themselves, and as such, and not as means to secure future happiness or to avoid future pain, do we legitimately desire to extend their limits and increase their sway.

We cannot, therefore, get rid of the duty of making the truth known by any easy self-

justification, or by any easy argument such as is contained in quoting the adage, "The righteous of all nations shall have a share in the world to come." Moreover, be it noted that even this famous and much-used sentence only speaks of the righteous. The wicked of all nations are apparently to be excluded from a share in future blessedness. But are they outside our care? Are they beyond the providence of God? It has been the weakness of many dogmatic religions that they have contemplated the fate of the wicked and the hostile with equanimity or satisfaction. But such narrow ideas have happily passed away. Is it, then, not clear, if truth and righteousness have any connection whatever — and remember that Judaism has boasted to possess not merely the truest conception of the Godhead but an exalted ethical code — that the number of the wicked among the nations must necessarily be reduced, when they are taught religious and moral truth? Jews are never weary of pointing out the virtues which their faith has caused. They are a righteous people *because* of their religion. But is truth not universal and catholic? Surely, then, those who are in possession of truth, and *through* that truth are righteous, should not regard the wicked among the nations with indifference and unconcern? Should not the light which shines upon Israel be allowed to shine

freely upon all? Should not the truth which Israel possesses be carried afar? Should it not be actively diffused throughout the world, so that by our agency truth and righteousness may be increased, and the dark dominion of ignorance be narrowed? "I will also give thee for a light to the nations that my salvation may be unto the ends of the earth." With which conception of our religion do these words cohere? To *their* writer is Judaism, or is it not, a missionary faith?

To meet these arguments, and others like them, a fresh theory has been invented to account for and to justify Jewish abstention from all propagandist endeavour. This theory attempts to face both ways, and like most such attempts, it is not particularly successful. Judaism, according to this theory, both is and is not a missionary faith. It fulfils its mission by silence. Some twenty-three years ago public attention was called to this very question by a famous lecture given, if my memory serves me rightly, by Max Müller in Westminster Abbey. The distinguished philologian and philosopher attempted to show that the higher and universal religions—those which counted and would count in the modern world—were by necessity missionary; Judaism neither was nor could be a missionary religion, and was therefore a merely tribal or national faith with no

power of development or extension. To this lecture the present Chief Rabbi responded in a sermon entitled, "Is Judaism a missionary faith?"—which was printed, and can still, I think, be read by the curious at the British Museum. In an article written by me in 1882 I quoted from it the following sentence, which sums up and well expresses the theory of Propaganda by Silence. "Judaism," the Chief Rabbi said, "has in very truth a missionary vocation to fulfil, in the highest and noblest sense of the term, a propagandism which does not rest on the imperfect agency of human words and human persuasion, but on the silent moral force of truth, truth which must and will prevail. The missionary labours of Judaism must be carried on in calm and dignified silence, by showing the world that adherence to our faith constitutes our life and our happiness, by helping to destroy prejudice and error, and by teaching the world the holy truths enshrined in the book of books." So far as I understand the writer's full meaning—and, happily, if I misunderstand, I can be corrected—it is this. The mere existence of believing Jews who, through their faith, lead righteous and happy lives, will silently destroy error; it will silently teach the world the truths of the Old Testament, and it will silently prove that Judaism is the best and truest of all religions. I will not deny that

the mere existence of the Jews has been and is of religious benefit to the world. But that silence is the best way to propagate religious truth seems a most extraordinary notion. Truth must and doubtless will prevail. The will of God must always triumph in the end. But are we not to labour actively for righteousness and truth because, since God is their author, truth and righteousness must necessarily conquer? Doubtless human words and human persuasion are imperfect, but nevertheless it is only by *their* means that truth has been and is being diffused in every department of knowledge, only by their means that righteousness has been increased. If you want to teach the world the holy truths enshrined in a book, it is curious that for more than two thousand years you have never attempted to translate that book, or make it accessible to the world at large; it is also noticeable that you conduct your religious services in a language which amongst outsiders, except to a few scholars, is wholly unknown. There is, indeed, as we shall all acknowledge, a right and a wrong method of propagating truth, but that for Judaism the one right method must be silence, seems to me equivalent, on the one hand, to indifference and neglect, on the other to self-stultification and surrender.

At this point I must break off for to-day,

but I will ask you to join with me in pursuing the subject—which has, perhaps, a greater bearing upon our Union and its mission than you may discern at first sight—upon a subsequent Sabbath.

III

I RESUME upon the present Sabbath the subject which I discussed a week ago. That subject, namely, whether Jews should seek to make their faith more widely known in the outer world, seems to me by no means inappropriate for the present occasion. We are celebrating the Festival of the Passover. What is the religious essence or core of that festival? The mere details of the particular event recorded in Exodus do not greatly concern us. Many of us can no longer adhere in loving faith to its miraculous elements. Whether so many thousand Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea, whether so many thousand Israelites ate unleavened bread, does not greatly matter. What we do celebrate, as it seems to me, what the picturesque ceremonial does symbolise, is the birthday of our religion, the birthday of a race consecrated to a religious mission. The Passover is a religious festival, or it is nothing. The kingdom of priests was then established, even though it was a long time before any

adequate religious self-consciousness of its destiny and mission awoke in the minds of any individual member of the kingdom. We, to-day, can only fitly celebrate the Passover by making it a symbol, by putting into it much which was not in it at the beginning, but which gives to it now, and may, I think, continue to give to it, power, meaning, and importance. On the festival of the Passover it is not, then, inappropriate to consider how far Judaism and the Jews, or any section of Judaism and any section of the Jews, can be true to their ancient mission, how far they can play any effective part in the religious history and development of the modern world.

We saw last Sabbath that the theories to account for, and to justify, on religious grounds, the abstention of Judaism from all missionary endeavours were all more or less unsatisfactory. But I also indicated that the impure methods of proselytism, too frequently adopted by Christians of various sects, both towards the heathen and towards the Jews, have not unnaturally given the Jews a thorough distaste for, a genuine dislike of, all propagandist endeavour. In direct religious work, above all other kinds of work, the means must be as holy as the end. In religious work, above all, the end never justifies the means. This point need not here be

laboured. That force and violence, that deceit and trickery, that the abuse of trust and confidence, that bribery and prevarication, are odious and abominable methods of widening the limits of truth needs no proving, and even no telling. We who have suffered from all these methods, we who suffer from some of them to-day, are naturally inclined to extend our hatred and contempt of the methods to the end and purpose which can be associated with means so irreligious, so immoral, and so vile.

Nor would I, for one, seek to deny the measure of truth which lies in the various unsatisfactory and inadequate theories which were reviewed last Sabbath. I, for one, do not believe that any one religion contains complete truth, or that in any other religion there can be no aspect of truth, no special type and quality of real religiousness or real morality, which does not exist in my own. God lets his truth shine through many windows, and the light refracted in various ways and by various media is yet light. The Judaism which I believe in, and the adherents to which I would fain see increase in power and in numbers, does not hold that whatever is new in any other religion is not true, and that whatever is true is not new. The Judaism which I would teach makes no such extravagant and exclusive demand. Not only

does it not say, "Extra me nulla salus," but it does not even say, "Extra me nulla veritas."

Nevertheless I do hold, and you will all agree with me, that our religion does enshrine some important truths, that it does stand for vital doctrines of religion and morality which we hope to see extend their sway in the modern world. Nor can I hold that we ourselves have nothing else to do but to preserve silence; that our only duty is to keep the truth, as we believe it and live by it, carefully away from the sight and knowledge of our fellow-men. The propagation of religious truth by right and timely methods still seems to me a high religious duty, and especially in those who have called themselves, or have been called, the witnesses of God. The primary business of a witness is surely not to keep perpetually silent.

Again, as it seems to me, the question of making the truth known, or, at any rate, of not hiding it from view, is independent of the question whether the Jews are not merely a religious community, but also a nation. The independence of the two questions is seen in the fact that those who assert, and those who deny, that the Jews are a nation, are recruited from opposite ranks as regards religion. Liberals and conservatives belong to both sides. A religion which *must* be

limited to a single race or nation is to-day an anachronism. If the Jews are a nation, then it must be possible for the members of that nation to include believers in many creeds, and if Judaism is more than a tribal religion, then it must be possible for the believers of that religion to include members of many nations. The co-extension of nationality and religion is what we object to in Russia, and what we hold to be a survival from a superseded and irrecoverable past.

But what, it will be asked, is the practical moral of all these words? "What would you ask us that we should *do*? Are we to send out missions to India and China, to compete with the missionaries of other religions in their own chosen fields?" I, of course, do not urge anything so unpractical. It is impossible to take up the work where it was laid down many hundred years ago. Conditions have widely changed, and we have changed with them. Direct propagandist endeavours may no longer be within our power, and *because* not within our power, it would be idle and silly to talk about, and recommend them. But because such direct and organised endeavours are not within our scope, it does not follow that our entire policy, and still less that our conscious and accepted ideal, must be one of deliberate silence. We have, as seems to me, to begin by changing our ideal,

by breaking down our old and long-established indifference to what the outer world believes (except in its reflex influence on ourselves), by recognising that the propagation of truth must always be an ideal to those who believe that they possess it. We have to break down our exclusiveness, our comparative disregard of the movements of religious thought beyond our own borders. We must be more willing to welcome new-comers to our own fold; we must make the conditions of their reception less difficult. And again we must, prior to attempting to exercise any influence upon the outer world, put our own religious house in order. We must try to see things as they are. We must seek to learn what we ourselves believe. We must attempt to know what modern Judaism really implies, what is its religious relation to the actual faiths and doctrines of the modern world around us. We want Judaism to be more than a mere family tradition. We want to think no less nobly of it than the Seer who said: "Behold, I appoint you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may be unto the ends of the earth."

But we do not want to be self-deceived. We must clarify our ideas; we must gradually shape them into articulate words and doctrines. We must look outside as well as inside. We must recognise those who are our antagonists

and those who are our allies. We must find out if old names still mean old doctrines. We must study—so far as we can—the present religious position of the world; we must open our eyes and perceive what doctrines are still fresh, and which are superseded or perishing; where the growing religious thought of the world has arrived, and whither it is tending. We must seek to estimate how this general thought and its conclusions affect our own position and the historic teachings of our own faith. Then we must consider what in our own religion is still strong and true and capable of growth, and what is weak and erroneous and decaying. We must ask what we have to ignore or let drop, what we have to emphasise and strengthen; where the setting sets off the jewel, where it hides it from the view; where the raiment of form is appropriate, where the swaddling clothes stiffen and deform.

To this extent, at least, we shall sympathise with one of the old theories about Judaism and its future, which has been partly used to prop up the doctrine that Judaism is not a missionary faith. For we, too, shall admit that what is most important in Judaism is not its ceremonial, but its teaching, not its rites, but its doctrines. If the doctrine, so far as it is true and pure, prevails, we shall mind less about the embodiment; nor shall

we, in the last resort, mind about the *name*. If Judaism triumph under another name, if we can even help in and further such a triumph, we shall be content. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us be the glory."

Such, then, is the task before us; such the purpose and the aim, for which, and in the light of which, we should seek to study the task, and help towards its solution and accomplishment. It is a heavy task, upon which many generations must labour; which needs not merely determination and effort, but clarity of thought, emancipation of mind, liberty of action, liberty of speech. I look around and ask myself: Is English Judaism capable and willing and likely to take part in this work? Is it free enough, is it clear enough? are its eyes enough open, its ears enough alert? I deeply regret, for my part, to be compelled to believe that the answer to this question can only be in the negative. And, therefore, though we are only a tiny fragment of English Judaism, though our numbers are very few and our future extremely uncertain, I yet feel that, at the present time, it is only the Union who, with slow and feeble steps, and in the smallest measure and degree, can take any share in the preparatory labours of self-enlightenment, purification, and development. If *we* are not to do it, or rather if

we cannot and are not to make a tiny contribution towards its accomplishment, then, for the present, nothing, or next to nothing, can be done in England at all. For only we, as I venture to think, may open our eyes and see; only we may freely follow the argument of truth whither truth may lead; only we may open our mouths and speak.

The Servant of the Lord, according to the prophetic conception, had a certain duty toward his own community as well as toward the outer world. The witnesses of God had to bear testimony to the men of their own race. And so too, in our own day, as it seems to me, it is a time to speak and a time to witness, not only, and not even primarily, to others, but mainly, and in the first place, to ourselves. In Judaism, as in Christianity, there are doubtless many shades of religious opinion, but, broadly speaking, there are two main parties—the traditionalists, or whatever other term they like to use, on the one hand, the liberals or progressists upon the other. And what, to begin with, needs saying is that liberal Judaism, in its various forms and shades, is positive and constructive. It is sometimes supposed by the traditionalists that the one aim of liberal Judaism is to destroy, that its one business and purpose is to rip up and pull down from

sheer delight in negation and destruction. But that is a false supposition. To pull down what is inwardly rotten or obsolete; to pull down in order to let in air and light is one thing. To pull down for the mere fun of havoc is quite another. Religious truth can never be merely negative. Its negations are only the other side of affirmations. And religious truth is what we all aim at, and what we all hold dear. The liberal and the traditionalist are in some matters agreed, in others they differ. But the points wherein they differ are not accurately described by saying that what the traditionalist believes the liberal denies. That would be making the one all affirmation, the other all denial. Both are at least equally positive and constructive, and where they differ, it is not merely that the one thinks the other *wrong*, but what is of far greater consequence, that each thinks that *he* is *right*. The truth to liberals is as positive and as precious as it is to traditionalists. It is as coherent and of a piece. We *want* our doctrine to prevail, we think that it *will* prevail, because we believe it to be true, because we believe that it has the essential qualities of truth, because we believe that it will produce, and be helpful towards, the higher righteousness and the most abiding peace. Of all the strange misconceptions of our

position, perhaps the strangest is the idea, however honestly held, that we ought to keep our faith to ourselves, and not to disseminate the truth as we honour it and believe it. For, within the community or without the community, it is, as it seems to me, our duty to be witnesses for the truth, the positive, the light and life bringing truth, as we conceive it and love it. Within as without the community we have to remember that if there is a time to keep silence, there is also a time to speak.

Nevertheless, for speech too there is a right opportunity and a wrong. Two important limitations suggest themselves and must be borne in mind. First, in order to secure certain supremely valuable ends which are common to us all—such as that of teaching little children that God is righteous and loving and wishes them to be truthful and good—it may be highly reasonable for liberals to associate themselves with traditionalists, even on the condition that in the attainment of that end much else shall be taught with which they, the liberals, are in disagreement and would wish to see modified or omitted, and much omitted which they would wish to see taught. Any condition thus entered into for common work must be honourably obeyed. It can rightly continue so long as the end in view cannot otherwise be achieved. Secondly,

the best and most nutritive foods are not wholesome for all stomachs and at all times; even so the highest and purest truth, in all its sides and aspects, may not be wholesome and desirable for all minds at all times and seasons. So far as there is an aspect of liberal Judaism which is destructive—even although it be only destructive in order to produce a more permanent and a nobler construction—it may not be desirable to speak of it where the auditor would be unable to appreciate or apprehend it rightly.

But is it not the fact that there are hundreds of Jews and Jewesses in all classes of society to whom free, if reverent, speech about the foundations and tenets of Judaism can do no possible religious harm, but may just possibly —if the evils of silence and indifference have not gone too far—do positive religious and spiritual good? For my part, I have not wholly lost my faith in human nature, whether among Gentiles or Jews. I cannot believe, if the faith of our ancestors were as earnestly and as widely believed to-day as it was believed, say, one hundred or two hundred years ago, if the main dogmas—I have no fear or dislike of the word—of traditional Judaism, and above all the dogma of the Perfect, Immutable, and Divine Code, were as sincerely held to-day as they were held of old, that there would be as much indifference,

or even as much neglect of ceremonial, as we all acknowledge and observe. Many causes doubtless combine to produce the present unsatisfactory result, but among these causes a slackening of religious faith, including a scepticism as to the Perfect and Immutable Code, is undoubtedly one. It is this cause which we have to deal with; for the religious faith which has been undermined by thought and criticism, we have to substitute another, built on surer and more permanent foundations, yet equally Jewish, equally capable of making him who possesses it warm with the love of God, and eager to be his servant and his witness. I know that some of my friends think that I exaggerate the importance of doctrine, and the importance of whether a Jew thinks critically, or thinks traditionally, or does not think at all, about the Bible and the Pentateuch. They do not convince me. Faith must always be the essential element in all true religious life, in all higher communion with God. And, as to the Bible, it seems to me of grave moment that Judaism should still be held, and still be taught, to rest upon foundations which can no longer be reconciled with the assured conclusions of knowledge. Listen to this sentence from a book by a learned and impartial Christian divine of America. "In the great Universities of Europe and America, and in the leading theological schools, *there is*

not a single teacher of commanding scholarship who still adheres to the traditional view of the Old Testament." If Judaism be inseparably tied to that view, if we cannot disentangle ourselves from it, can we still be the witnesses of God, who is the author of truth no less than he is the author of goodness? But if we *can* disentangle ourselves from it, if we can reach a higher truth, no less monotheistic, no less religious, should we not seek to do so for our own sakes, for our children's sake, for the sake of our mission and our charge?

These high ends, which, as it seems to me, are all coherent and consistent, all tending in one direction—the direction of freedom, enlightenment, religion, and truth—I pray that our Union, if it continue to live, may be able, in its small and insignificant degree, to forward and to serve.

IV

Not long ago I met an earnest and devout Jewish friend who spoke to me with great seriousness and with some anxiety on the question, as he called it, of the authority of the Bible. On the assumption that his case is not isolated, that there are several others who feel the same difficulties as he, I venture to speak upon this subject on the present occasion.

What he said was something like this. He had been brought up to believe that the Bible was perfect in all its parts and true in its every statement; above all, he believed that the Pentateuch was in a special and peculiar sense the Word of God. The commandments of the Pentateuch, whether moral or ritual, had seemed to him direct commandments of God, and as such to be implicitly obeyed. He had not been taught any special or elaborate *theory* of inspiration, but at the same time there was no doubt whatever in his mind that the prophets said what they said, or wrote what they wrote, at the direct

bidding of God. And when he read in the Pentateuch, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying," he had believed that God really did speak such words to Moses, and that Moses wrote down the very words which emanated from God. Such was his belief. The authority of the Bible was therefore perfectly simple and at the same time perfectly impregnable. It was true, because its source was God: the laws were to be obeyed because God had ordered them.

But now, he said, he could no longer fully accept the belief of his childhood and of his early manhood. He did not desire to imply that he was an advanced critic, or that he rejected the miraculous, or that he did not believe in inspiration, but he felt puzzled. He was no longer untroubled in his faith. He was drifting. He was bound to acknowledge that not every passage in the prophets, not every command in the Law, seemed to him equally excellent, perfect, and true; he felt that the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, or at least of many parts of it, was extremely dubious. He could not deny that the arguments of the critics were powerful and weighty; he could not shut his eyes or cloud his reason; it seemed to him almost a duty to study, for God was not only supreme righteousness, but also supreme truth; yet he sighed for the untroubled, the serene

faith of his early manhood; the old moorings were loosened; he did not know whither his reading and thoughts would carry him. He still loved his Bible; he still loved the old passages in Seer and Psalmist and Lawgiver which he had loved of old; but where was their *authority*? Above all, if—he disliked the question, and yet he was forced to ask it—if, where the words ran, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying," it was not the Lord who spake, and it was not Moses who heard and wrote, what value could remain or inhere in the words, what authority in the commands? Why should one observe such commands? Why should one feel especial veneration and admiration for a book so full of gigantic claims which could no longer be regarded as absolutely justifiable and true?

I do not know for certain whether many people feel as this man felt, or are troubled as he was troubled. But it is probable that his feelings and troubles are not peculiar to himself. As they are the product of conditions common to many, so many will participate in them.

For religious difficulties, if stifled and ignored, tend to grow, or they settle themselves in an unsatisfactory manner. They become an additional motive to the other motives which keep people away from public worship and hinder the full development of

the religious life. And even if they have not such results as these, they make us unhappy and ill at ease. Therefore it is justifiable now and then to speak on topics which, in their fulness and detail, are fitted rather for lectures and essays than for sermons. What, after all, can a sermon hope for more than to contain a suggestive thought or admonition which may happen to suit the needs and feelings of some of those who chance to hear it?

We shall not lessen our difficulties and troubles by minimising them, but at the same time we need not exaggerate. And perhaps we are inclined, on the one hand, to over-emphasise the difference between the old and the new way of looking at the Bible, and, on the other hand, to underestimate the authority and greatness which still belong to it, even when looked at from a newer and less rigid point of view.

Let me state at once what seems to me the most important consideration of all. The old authority of the Bible, it is urged, rested upon the belief that it was the unqualified word of God. We obeyed a given command in the Pentateuch because we believed that it was the mandate of the Supreme Being. But surely this is not quite all. Not merely because God gave it did we obey the command, but because we believed that God

is good. Imagine the world governed by a Deity, all powerful indeed, but not all good. He might issue a command, which in fear we might obey, but this obedience would be quite different from the obedience which our fathers rendered to the laws of the Pentateuch. They did not obey because obedience paid, and rebellion brought punishment; they obeyed because the Lawgiver was good. If he were not believed to be good, to disobey might be far nobler than to obey. One remembers the famous utterance of John Stuart Mill about the unrighteous God. Now in all matters of morality, beyond and above any written words, God has given us the supreme criterion and test of our own reason and conscience. The sixth commandment says, "Thou shalt do no murder." But would any one think it less wrong to murder, if it turned out that no divine voice audibly enunciated the command? Throughout the realms of morality—and, after all, the more important commands of the Pentateuch are moral—our only test of the divineness of a command is its goodness. The authority of the ethical element of the Bible is that ethical element itself. Though the Supreme Being said, "Thou shalt not steal," stealing is not wrong merely because God said it was wrong, but because we believe that God is good. But if he is good and the author of

goodness, then a good command is from him, whether we humanise God and in childlike faith suppose that the divine voice said the words, or whether we hold that the commandment was given by a man. In either case the goodness of the command can only exist and reside in itself, in its own quality; its authority is in itself, and its ultimate author is just as much God, whether his lips framed the words or whether they did not. If we say that God is good, this means that the test of divineness, like the essence of the divine nature, is goodness. That the command is at bottom regarded as divine, because it is good, and not good because it is divine—so far as moral laws are concerned—we may clearly see by our discomfort, in the old days of traditional belief, when anybody, with cogent arguments, pointed out to us a Pentateuchal law which did not seem to be wholly good. At once we felt ill at ease, because we realised that what is not good cannot be divine. We attempted more or less haltingly to prove that the law was good in its own time and place, and thus we showed that the real authority of the moral laws lies not in their supposed direct provenance from God, but in their goodness. Still, therefore, does the authority of the greatest and most binding things in the Bible remain what it was: our belief in the existence of divine righteousness; our conviction that

what is supremely good is specially divine. For not the foretellings in the prophetical writings, even when these were justified by the event, mark the finger of God, but the familiar verses, "I desire love and not sacrifice," and "What doth the Lord require of thee?" and "Rend your heart and not your garments." No mechanical theory of inspiration can add to the august majesty of these words; no higher criticism can detract from them. Their sanction is given in their very utterance. They stand by their own worth.

But what, it may be said, of the ritual and ceremonial law? If God did not directly order Moses to lay down the rules of the Passover, why should we observe it to-day? Here, too, let us not attempt to minimise the differences of point of view; but here, too, let us not exaggerate. It is doubtless true that the simplest reason for the observance of the ceremonial laws was that which regarded them as ukases of a wise and good sovereign. God in his wisdom and goodness ordered them; the grounds and motives for them he has usually left unexplained. But men could not always remain satisfied with such unquestioning obedience, and they have constantly sought for reasons to dignify and justify the letter of the code. These reasons have been either ethical or utilitarian, and thus we mark the tendency even among those who

believed in the most verbal inspiration, to discern the value of a law in its goodness or utility. Once more, then, we come back to the old ethical standard, and the justification of the law is sought for in its excellence or advantageousness.

The old believer did not merely observe the Passover or the dietary laws because he believed that God had ordered them, but because he believed that they were good; it was to his spiritual advantage to observe them. The laws were good; they were good, if I may so express it, over and above their source.

I, therefore, would contend that such ceremonial laws as you or I may observe to-day have still a certain authority, even although we do not believe that they were given by Moses or directly ordered by God. I admit that there is a marked difference between the old view and the new. Men are less likely to observe laws if they no longer believe that God has directly ordained them and will surely punish their violation. A law which seems to me excellent may seem to another man a mere superstition, a foolish custom, an anachronism, a needless survival; but those who hold a law to be that will not trouble their heads to find an *authority* for its observance, they will simply ignore or disobey it. My contention is that those who

think the laws good — good for us to observe here and now — need not worry themselves about their authority. The very fact that for them the laws are good is itself their authority and an adequate authority. The authority of a form can lie in its past history and its present worth ; in its effect for good both yesterday and to-day.

We sometimes contrast the trouble of uncertainty and doubt with the peace and assurance of the old, simple, unquestioning belief. Thus my friend who spoke with me about the authority of the Bible, seemed to hold that the old view tended to happiness and confidence ; the new to anxiety and mistrust. But I fancy that here too there is exaggeration. The real peace, the real happiness, belong to those who wholly and firmly believe in the goodness of God and in the possibility of communion with him. This belief need not be weakened by a changed attitude towards inspiration and the Bible. We shall surely not believe the more that God speaks to us now because we believe that in some mysterious and exceptional sense he spoke with Moses three thousand two hundred years ago. Perhaps we may even *the more* believe in the reality of divine communion now, if we hold that in no other way did he speak to Psalmist and Prophet of old.

Nor let us forget that the newer estimate of inspiration, the modern criticism of the Pentateuch, the changed attitude towards the miraculous, are not merely negative, but also positive. If they cause doubt on the one hand, they bring emancipation and enlightenment on the other. All kinds of troubles about the ethical value of many Pentateuchal laws, their curious parallelism with the customs of many semi-civilised nations all over the world, the inconsistency of law with law, the cruelty of this injunction, the crudity of a second, the superstitiousness of a third, vanish immediately. If these laws were given by the direct utterance of God, they are indeed a puzzle. But if they are simply part of a growth, of a history, the purport and substance of which we perceive to be great, and good, they no longer perplex us. They are then merely part and parcel of the general process of the world, of the higher and divine law by which the upward history of man is guided and controlled. If every word in the Bible is perfect and divine, then between our highest human conceptions of goodness and the divine goodness there is a jarring dissonance and breach; but if we may distinguish in the Bible, as in any other book, between better and worse, true and false, temporary and eternal, the divineness of the good and the goodness of the divine

are the more assured. To separate the ore from the dross does not make the ore less genuine; it makes it all the clearer and more distinct. If, in a moment of weakness, we exclaim, "What value is left to the Bible, if we once begin to cavil and criticise, to say this is good and that is bad, this is true and that is false, this is religion and that is superstition, this is temporary and that is eternal, this is human and that is divine?" we shall, on reflection, soon perceive that the value of the good and the true will be all the deeper when they are made to rest upon their own authority and to shine with their own light. If you like to use the words or press the phrase, say, if you please, that the Bible is wholly human; but if it be so, "What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god!" If the Bible be human, how divine is man!

Perhaps the lack of interest which so many people show in the Hebrew Bible is due to a sort of dim feeling that it is not quite real. But if we come to believe and realise that the heroes of the Bible drew near to God, and that he came near to them, by the same ways and laws as we and he may approach towards each other to-day, then the Book becomes invested with a peculiar and living interest. It is no longer remote, unreal, and shadowy;

it will seem well worth our study, for behind and in spite of an unfamiliar phraseology, we shall find the record of a communion with God, in its highest phases indeed more intimate and greater than what we can aspire to, but yet neither alien in kind, nor governed by different laws, from the communion which we too can feel and know. And if the interest of the Bible is heightened, its real authority will remain undisturbed. It is no longer the Word of God in the old sense, but it *is* the Word of God in the valid sense that what is great and good and true has its source and origin in the supreme and divine Reality.

Nor let us be perturbed by the objection that in this newer sense the great and good and true words of other sacred writings, or indeed of any ordinary and secular books, must also be regarded as divine. Why should they *not* be so regarded? It seems to me a far greater difficulty to understand why God has suffered many ages and races to grope in ignorance and superstition than why he has allowed his light to shine in many places, or a knowledge of goodness and truth to be independently attained by many different minds. Some people seem rather annoyed if they are told, for example, that close parallels to the finest passages in the Psalter exist in another ancient literature. But I think

that, so far from being annoyed, we should rejoice. The wider the spacial range of human greatness, the better surely we should be pleased.

Nor must we be made uneasy should any one say that, in the new attitude, we ourselves become the assessors and judges of the Bible's excellence and authority, whereas, according to the old view, we believed in its excellence because we accepted its authority. In both cases we act as judges. For if we accepted the authority of the Bible as the Word of God, this was only because the book seemed to us worthy of being so regarded, or because we accepted the verdict of some other person or persons whose judgment seemed to us wholly worthy of unquestioning credence. We cannot rid ourselves of responsibility for any act of faith. Nor can our belief in the ethical and religious greatness of the Bible finally rest upon any external authority. The sentence, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," obtains its greatness and its authority from itself.

But if all the Bible be not good and true, it may still be argued and objected: who is to pick and choose? What seems good and divine to one person or age may seem feebly human to another. Directly we descend from the few highest generalities of ethics and religion, it may indeed be true that moral

ideals and institutions are susceptible of change and development. But none the less can we admit or discover any other ultimate standard of right or wrong, of true and false, than our own God-given reason. A book, a tradition, an institution, may inspire our utmost veneration and respect. We may call and regard it as divine. Our conceptions of good and evil may be moulded and fashioned by it. None the less it is only because we believe in its goodness and truth that, as grown men and women, we believe in and accept its authority. When the unquestioning belief in its goodness and truth begins to quaver, the authority is shaken at its roots.

Taken as a whole, the Bible is rightly called divine, because its highest teachings are not mere occasional elegancies, like the best lines of a poem which can be picked out as the plums of a pudding. Its highest teachings, its loftiest experiences, are bone of its bone and spirit of its spirit. There is something higher than the highest words of the Bible; and that is the life, the spirit, both human and divine, which these words attest and which gave them birth. God working in man, the divine spirit in the human, this is what the greatness of the Bible reveals, and here is its authority. Or, in other words, the authority of the Bible has partly to be proved by the course of history. The moral

and religious truth of the highest teachings of the Bible corresponds with the self-revelation of the divine in the whole history of man. If God is revealed in history, the Bible reveals him too.

V

"Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath."—Job xlii. 7.

This is one of the most surprising utterances in the whole Book of Job. On one particular critical hypothesis, the saying can, and perhaps should, be explained away, but as the verse now stands in the general scheme of the book, it can have only one interpretation. The audacious but honest Job is more acceptable to God than God's orthodox, old-fashioned, but yet inaccurate defenders. Job had loudly attacked the justice of God's rule. The friends had supported it. Job had emphatically proclaimed his own innocence; he had asserted in no measured language that there was no correspondence between his sufferings and his deserts. The friends, in order to maintain a theory which to them seemed inextricably connected with the rule of a righteous God—the theory, namely, that the amount of human suffering is always in strict accord with the amount of human sin—had not scrupled to shut their eyes firmly against

the facts, and to insist, with greater and increasing vehemence as the dialogue proceeded, that Job must have been, and that therefore he had been, guilty of much and frequent iniquity. If the facts would not suit the theory, so much the worse for the facts. They must be *made* to fit it. The justice of God, the orthodox faith, which asserted that suffering was only inflicted because of sin, must be upheld and championed at all costs and hazards. The friends were, perhaps, honest when they started, but their clear-cut orthodox theory proved too much for them. They forgot that the God whose rule and methods they sought to defend was not only a God of justice; they forgot that he was also, and quite as much, the God of Truth. And in spite of his audacities and irreverences (which did not pass without rebuke) God preferred Job who refused to violate the Truth, and who sought to make his conception of God square with fact, to the friends who were so keen to defend the divine honour that they forgot to honour the divine truth.

"Which things are a parable." Over and over again has it happened in the history of religion that the defenders of orthodox opinions have played the part of Job's friends. Over and over again have they supposed that their particular faith, nay, religion itself, and the very existence of God, depended upon

some tenet, some dogma, some supposed fact, some theory, which science or history or advancing morality or common sense or criticism was irreverently calling in question. Again and again have these defenders been left high and dry by the advancing tide of thought; again and again have opinions, which in one generation were regarded as indispensable buttresses or even elements of the faith and of religion, been quietly abandoned in a second or third generation without religion, or the faith of any individual believer, being in the smallest degree the worse. The lessons of history repeat themselves, but they have to be always learned afresh. And, therefore, those who know that truth in the long run always comes by her own, those who believe that new truth is as acceptable to God, or rather is as much a part of God, as old truth, those who set up no human barriers to the progress of human thought—no idle "thus far and no further" —can be perfectly quiet when they are called hard names, perfectly satisfied and at ease. Time is on their side. Truth is everlasting. If Judaism be true enough to square with facts, it will live, and if it be not true enough, it will die. We believe the former; but in that case, though we must work for the truth, and if need be, suffer for the truth, we need not be agitated or alarmed. We need not mistrust, and say, "But time escapes." For

us too and for our cause, for the cause of Liberal Judaism and of Truth, the fervid answer holds, "What's time? Leave Now for dogs and apes. Man has Forever."

Thus in dealing with and studying the Bible; if we have as our guide reverence, and our goal truth, all will be well. In the Bible, as in every other book, or in every department of life, let us never palter with our highest conceptions of Truth and of Righteousness. For it is these conceptions which are the nearest thing we have within us to God, they are that which is most akin to the divine nature, and therefore our most precious and most permanent possessions.

In a previous sermon I ventured to state that the Bible might rightly be called both human and divine. In the present sermon I propose to draw out that view in somewhat greater detail.

At the first blush, the ascription of the two adjectives—both human and divine—to one and the same book savours of unreality. It seems an unreal evasion, an insecure trifling with truth. It may seem an unworthy attempt to run with the hare and to hunt with the hounds, as if those who use it wish, on the one hand, to make all due concessions to history and to criticism, and on the other hand, to preserve the old reverence and the old language of

religious homage for Pentateuch and Bible. It may be thought that such retention of ancient epithets must now be hypocritical. The human mind is often impatient of those who would seek to combine two seemingly opposite points of view. It tends to approve the familiar argument: "Either—or"; it is inclined to say to those who look for a deeper unity which shall unite apparent contradictions and transcend them: "You cannot have it both ways." And so here: people are accustomed to the idea and to the words, "a human book," or "a human code." It seems to convey an intelligible conception to their minds. So, too, when they hear the phrase, "a divine book," or "a divine law," the words seem to hold a meaning. They think they understand them. But when it is asserted that, in a certain right sense, one may justly speak of a book as not only human but also divine, it seems, at the first blush, mere jugglery and nonsense.

But in thinking thus, are we not the victims of a false simplicity and of a false abstraction? What right meaning can be given to a purely divine book? We can only apprehend the divine through the human. The divine can only be clothed and transmitted in human words, in human form. By what organs are we to appreciate it, by what tests to distinguish it? Even the

old Rabbis admitted a divine accommodation to human needs. The Torah speaks, they said, in the language of men. It tells of human deeds; it records human conversations; it embodies laws which have endless parallels with the laws and customs of other peoples; it includes diversities of statement, varieties of opinion, degrees of morality. Are these varieties and diversities, these laws which have their endless human parallels elsewhere, all equally and purely divine? If our reason has perforce to admit these varieties, diversities, and parallels, is our reason delusory and false? And yet what other gauge, what other means or method have we, for recognising the divine or for distinguishing it from the human? It seems clear that, on the one hand, we have no capacity for apprehending what is wholly and purely divine, and that, on the other hand, whatever claims to be divine must come before the bar of human reason, and submit to ordinary human tests. No book, no code, can, in one sense, be other than human, for a purely divine book, a purely divine code, is something beyond our reason and our ken.

But are, then, all books and codes *merely* human, and have none a claim to any measure of the divine? To this we may reply with a counter question: "Is the human reason purely human?" If it be, then are all books

merely human; if it be not, then in books too, or in some books, which are the product of that reason, we may also see the workings of the divine. Do you say that we are thus reducing all books to the same monotonous level? Surely not. Is a music hall catch on the same level as a sonata of Beethoven? Yet both in one sense are mere arrangements of sound. Is the lowest Australian savage on the same level as Isaiah or Plato? Yet both are human. Whatever difficulties there may be involved in an adequate presentation and nomenclature of the facts, we cannot refuse to allow that the highest products of the human will, the human reason, and the human soul, are also the most divine.

That which were purely divine, must be out of all relation to history and time, without relation to its environment. But as a matter of fact, no human history or book is without this relation. The history of the Jews, the books of the Bible, are unintelligible and meaningless when looked at out of relation to their environment. But when they are regarded *in* such relation, when the full resources of archæology, of history, of comparative religion, of philology, and of criticism are turned upon them, how living, how fascinating do they become! *Then* we can trace in them a growth, a development; a conflict between the higher and the lower; we can

detach the dross from the ore; the temporary from the eternal. We can humbly trace, as we believe, the workings of the divine spirit, the records, in human form and amid human imperfection, of the finger of God.

Since this view of the divine in the human has come to be widely acknowledged, the Bible has, we may say, been born again or rediscovered. No one who has begun to study it, or any part of it, on these historic lines, can find it dull or unintelligible. It is beginning to have a large number of fresh readers, and its greatness, its comfort, and its truths are being more widely appreciated and discerned. But, unfortunately, among *Jewish* students, the newer, historic, and rational view of the Bible is not allowed to prevail, and the result is that few good books about the Bible are being produced by *Jewish* scholars, whether for students or the general reader. If you ask for helpful aids to the study of Amos or Proverbs or Exodus or Samuel or Job, you must chiefly be referred to books written by Christians. Of these there are plenty; of good books written by modern Jews there are few. No one cares to read about the Bible from the old, unhistoric, isolated, atomistic point of view: few seem allowed, willing, or able to write about it from the new, living, historic, and critical point of view. The

people of the book are doing little for the book. And thus slowly, but I fear surely, Jews and Jewesses are becoming estranged from, and unfamiliar with, the written origins of their history and their faith.

The situation is serious. Is it impossible for Jewish students to write about the Bible in full accordance with the principles of history and of truth? Can they not write about it in accordance with the divine canon never to call anything, whether *in* the Bible or *not* in the Bible, perfectly good or perfectly true which our reason and our conscience, speaking with all possible caution and care, declare to fall short of such a standard? The Bible is great enough to stand this canon being applied to it. If it cannot submit to it, if our reason and our conscience, the equipments of knowledge, unfettered judgment and critical skill, are allowed and even bidden to discuss and assess the Koran, the Vedas, and the New Testament, but to halt before and beware of the Hebraic Scriptures, then surely the impartial outsider can only infer that this anxious scrupulosity must be due to the fear that these Scriptures cannot sustain the onset of knowledge without the crumbling away of their value and their authority. But this we will not believe. Let us welcome the fullest inquiry and investigation;

for these too are not without the sanction of God. It is the same God who works in our reason to-day as worked in it two thousand and three thousand years ago. It is the same God who helps us to-day to form our highest judgments upon goodness and religion as helped our ancestors of old. It is the same divine spirit to whom we owe the greatest and best things in the Bible, its highest and holiest truths, as now helps us to distinguish the good from the imperfect, the false from the true. Let there be no fear and no discouragement. The Bible is human; but the Bible is divine.

The conclusions thus obtained, and the confidence thus won, may be applied to the practical life with certain necessary reservations. The religious life of the individual is partly dependent upon the Bible and partly independent. In its higher aspects, in its direct communion with God, in its sense of God's presence, in its linking and interfusing the religious and the moral together, it is independent; but even here it is helped and nurtured by rites and institutions which are largely Biblical in origin and character. As regards the outward and religious life of the community, which strengthens and is strengthened by the inward life of the individual, this is still more emphatically the case. There are three ways of looking at the

religious laws of the Pentateuch and the Talmud. There is, first, the old way of unquestioned submission to their perfection, divineness, and authority. There is the new way of critical selection, of which a word presently. And, between these, there is a way, which has exercised, and is still exercising, an immense, and on the whole an unwholesome influence throughout Germany where it owes its origin, and even elsewhere. That way sounds, at first hearing, reasonable and attractive. It is this. Our reason, it argues, cannot and must not be shackled. No bounds must be put to human investigations and to critical inquiries. Thought and belief are free. But our actions are subject to our full control. Whatever may be the origin, authorship, and date of the law against eating rabbits, or against eating milk and meat together—as to which we may freely hold our own individual opinions—we may all freely elect and resolve not to eat rabbits or not to eat milk and meat together. The whole mass of the ceremonial and ritual laws should be the common bond which can unite together the scattered members of the race of Israel throughout the world. Believe what you like, but do not act as you like. Free thought: faithful observance. The distinguished historian Graetz, whose

portrait occupies a prominent position upon the walls of Jews' College, was a keen defender of this position, and I vividly remember a conversation with him in which he strenuously upheld it. In opinion he was extremely heretical; in his history he freely denies the unity and the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and inferentially he denies the truth of its miracles; but in his life he was a scrupulous observer of every detail of the Pentateuchal and Rabbinic law. There are many of our orthodox friends, I fear, who would be quite content that we should believe whatever we please, so long as we held our tongues and in practice observed the Law. But how can such a soulless observance, which springs from and is fed by no passionate conviction, be of any religious value? How can it truly nourish or express the religious life? It may be useful as a mere external bond, but as an outpouring, an uplifting, even a safeguarding, of the religious life and of religion, it is surely of no spiritual worth whatever. It degrades observance into the most barren legalism, the most outward conformity; it throws weight upon the shell, and ignores the spirit. It gives, indeed, to thought a certain spurious liberty, but even then it usually asks that this free thought shall be rigidly silent; it refuses to see that there must be a unity in life, so that man's

practice shall be the outcome of his beliefs. This theory, on the contrary, sets up a terrible divorce between the inward and outward, between action and faith.

Thus we come to the third and critical way —which seeks to choose out for observance from the total number of laws those which answer to a religious truth, which can be filled with a religious spirit, which have historic value and justification. In such a temper, and from this combined religious and historic point of view, we seek, for instance, to observe the Passover, the Pentecost, the New Year, and Day of Atonement. The laws and ceremonies which we observe we regard as Jewish, human, and divine. They answer to our deeper human needs; and because they answer to them, they are, as we believe, not without the sanction of the divine will, and they did not come into existence without the guidance of the divine spirit.

Such a religion, both on its theoretic and on its practical side, is not quite easy. But the best is not necessarily the easiest. A religion for thinking men and women is not rightly facile. But we shall gain thereby a religion which seeks for unity, which will admit no severance between practice and belief, which will attempt to do justice to the triple claims of history, of morality, and of Judaism.

Nevertheless one caution, one reminder, and yet a bracing reminder, must in conclusion be given. The modern man, as compared with the ancient man, must depend more upon himself, and less upon authority; more upon his own religious powers and less upon the nation or the community. He must seek out essentials; he must depend less upon crutches. And hence there is to-day a greater need, as in some respects there may be a greater comprehension, of the deeper, more inward, more mystical side of religion; a greater need that, without the help of ceremony or the mediation of outward rite, we get and draw nearer to the presence of God. There is truth, if also exaggeration, in that notable saying of W. Penn, in his most delightful and helpful little book, *The Fruits of Solitude:* "No visible acts of devotion can be without forms. But yet the less form in religion the better, since God is a spirit; for the more mental our worship, the more adequate to the nature of God; the more silent, the more suitable to the language of a spirit." To gain a greater hold upon the deepest truths and most intimate realities of religion we need, among other requirements, three things. First, suitable books; and here Jewish scholars, if they would translate and adapt for us some of the choicest flowers of Jewish mysticism, would

do a most valuable and needful work. Secondly, a greater purity and simplicity of life; thirdly, a more habitual and fearless practice from our youth upwards of private and bookless prayer. Our regular presence in this hall, our public observance of Jewish ceremonies and rites, must be only the outward witness of deeper and more spiritual exercises, of a more inward and pervasive religious life, which lies behind and below, hidden and unseen. For "underneath are the everlasting arms."

VI

"Purify our hearts to serve thee in truth."

As the text for this sermon I choose a few words from one of the oldest and the most beautiful of our Hebrew prayers. This prayer forms part of the *Amidah* for both the Sabbath morning and afternoon services, and it has been wisely incorporated into the new edition of our Union Prayer-Book.

The idea of spiritual purity and of the pure heart, the prayer to God to grant, or help towards, this purity, are already familiar to us in the Hebrew Bible. In the 24th Psalm, clean hands and pure heart are two of the four conditions laid down for admission to God's holy place; and in the great 51st Psalm—perhaps, taken all in all, the very greatest in the whole Psalter—the contrite author prays: "Create in me a pure heart, O God; and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

No conception has greater spiritual beauty than that of inward cleanness or purity. Like most, if not all, ethical and religious con-

ceptions, it has a physical or material origin; it has a growth, a history, which if time and knowledge permitted, it would be interesting to trace. Other conceptions, such, for instance, as sincerity or love, have lost their material antecedents altogether, or, at any rate, being only used in spiritual senses, their material origin is ignored or forgotten. But with purity this is not so. We use it still with a physical meaning. We speak of pure honey as well as of a pure heart. The truth is that the conception of purity marks as it were the meeting-point of the material and the spiritual. It expresses the transfiguration of the material by the spiritual, the hallowing of nature by the divine.

Between the wholly material application of the word "clean" or "pure," and its wholly immaterial usage in the prayer, "Create in me a pure heart, O God," there lies its semi-material and semi-spiritual sense in relation to those phases and forms of religion which themselves partake both of the material and the spiritual. Men did not pass quickly from speaking of pure honey to speaking of a pure heart. There was a long interval and a strange evolution in between. The conception of religious purity begins far back and low down in the history of religion. It begins with ideas which seem to us strange or absurd. It is connected with usages which

seem to us crude and sometimes even disgusting. And yet how distinctively human these ideas and usages are! How utterly removed from any notions or sensations which we can imagine an animal to possess or to feel!. However unworthy it may seem to apply the name of religion to these ideas and usages, they yet separate those who felt and practised them by an immense gap from the level of the beast.

Purity and impurity in the beginnings of the history of religion, and indeed far on in its history, had no necessary connection with morality. The region of the unclean was, in one sense and at one period, closely allied to the region of the supernatural, to the realm of the spirits and the demons and the dead. The unclean probably existed as a religious conception before the clean; impurity meant something before purity had received a meaning. Certain material things were regarded as the seat or manifestation of supernatural agencies and powers, and these things were unclean; being unclean, they were dangerous and tabooed. But they were also possessed of magical properties, if men knew how to use them aright, and therefore they were venerable if fearful. They were not only impure, but also sacred. When the mind of man had moved forward to the ideas of partly moralised divinities who warred with

the nameless demons of the nether world, or to the dualism of gods of light and gods of darkness, the conceptions of purity and impurity also underwent a change. The objects or rites which appertained to the spirits against whom the gods had fought became unclean from this association. The objects or rites which belonged to, or were identified with, the gods were, on the contrary, clean. When one religion was superimposed upon another, when one tribe conquered another tribe, the gods of the conquered sometimes became unclean spirits to the conquerors, dreaded but impure. Again, cleanness began to be attributed to the subject as well as to the object. A man was clean who was fit to approach his god; he was unclean in certain physical conditions or when contaminated by the touch of certain unclean things. The development of the conception need not be further pursued. It is one of the most intricate and fascinating chapters in the history of religion.

Concurrently with, or rather, as we may suppose, subsequently to, the conception of cleanness, as connected with religion, there came the idea of cleanness in our modern but also physical sense as opposed to dirtiness. The two together formed, I imagine, the basis for the metaphor of the clean heart. Originally the two conceptions were distinct.

A man, for instance, might be very dirty, but religiously clean, and *vice versa*. But gradually the two conceptions, while never coalescing, yet approached and influenced each other. Physical cleanliness, in one sense of the word, received a certain amount of religious sanction, while at the same time the old religious conceptions of clean and unclean were themselves given a sort of cleansing and purification.

It has been worth while to dwell upon these antecedents and origins of inward or religious purity (in the modern sense of the word), because they seem to embody, not merely error and superstition, but also *some* truth and *some* religion. They embody the religious truth—the emphatically Jewish truth — that during our life on earth the material is to be not destroyed but transfigured, that it is to be spiritualised by the manner of its use, that it is to be hallowed and purified, that it is to be dedicated and consecrated to God. The old ideas and usages of clean and unclean, however alien in many ways to our modern conceptions of God and of his relations with man, have yet this important truth that, however imperfectly and erroneously, they imply that common things and everyday practices can be degraded or sanctified, sanctified if used for the glory of God and in the service of righteousness, degraded

if used for the glory and in the service of evil.

The outward came first; the inward second. Physical and ritual purity preceded the purity of mind and heart; yet now we hark back from the second to the first. Because the body is the raiment of the soul—or whatever metaphor we choose to adopt—we say that the clean soul should be cased in a clean body; and we recognise that in the familiar proverb respecting the quality which comes next to godliness, there lies no unimportant truth.

And not only is the body the shrine or seat of the soul, but we know that the relations of body and soul, or body and mind, are of the subtlest possible nature. Some Jewish writers have attempted to find the *rationale* and meaning of the Pentateuchal dietary laws in the peculiar psychical effects of certain foods; and though, in the light of comparative religion and the researches of students like Dr. Frazer and others, such explanations may seem whimsical, yet the root-idea of the interconnection of body and mind remains as real and as important as ever. It is not without a deep significance that eating and drinking have played such an important part in all religions. It is more than interesting to remember that fermented drink, the cause of so much vice and brutality, is habitually

used in sacraments, and that the blessing upon wine is characteristically Jewish. Man alone, they say, among animals, cooks his food, but man alone, among animals, says grace over and thanks God for his food. Man can spiritualise the natural; he can use it for higher ends. If you go on Fridays about noon to the Jews' Infant Schools in Whitechapel, you may see many a little boy before he eats his frugal dinner, which on that day is eaten at school, put on his hat. This is not because he is going to say grace, for the grace has already been said, but simply because mere eating is a sort of religious act. Those who so regard it will assuredly tend towards eating for living rather than living for eating. It is right that drunkenness should be a rare Jewish vice. It may, however, become us all to remember that all luxury and excess in food and drink is a form of impurity. It is a dragging down of the human; it is making the soul serve the body instead of the body serving the soul. It is a waste of spirit. It is pollution. There is no more Jewish sentiment than the injunction of St. Paul: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." This does not mean that at every meal we must, as it were, think or talk of religious truths; nor must we take it to mean that a simple pleasure in well-cooked food or in

satisfying a hungry appetite is wrong. But it means that our eating and drinking must be conducted with seemliness, with due regard to higher ends, and in no antagonism to duty; that no impurity of speech, no ugly story, should accompany them; that they must be means, not ends, and therefore consecrated, though no solemn word be spoken, to the service of God.

But there is one side of human life—a side perhaps too delicate and sacred to dwell on at length—where the material and the spiritual, the outward and the inward, specially meet and commingle. Here, too, in the great mystery of sex, and of the relations of the two sexes to one another, Judaism enjoins the same kind of principle. We are not to destroy, we are not merely to abstain, but to spiritualise and to transfigure.

No aspect of human life can be more ennobled and purified than this aspect; none can be made more shameful, more cruel, and more repulsive. No purity more pure than the purity of pure womanhood; no corruption more corrupt than its corruption. The mystery of birth is as great as the mystery of death. A new body and a new soul appear. If a relation or aspect of life have issues so supreme and mysterious, can it be purified too greatly, can it be glorified too much? Should it not be rightly en-

circled with the halo of poetry and of religion? "Create in me a pure heart, O God." Yes, and remembering the inclusive sense in which the Hebrews used the word "heart," we may say, "Create in me a pure *will*, O God," so that I may make my every desire obedient to purity and righteousness. Jews used to vaunt that such purity was a specially Jewish virtue. If it be that, partly owing to circumstances wherein we are more sinned against than sinning, we, as a community, cannot still boast of the virtues of our ancestors, let us at least seek to vanquish the wicked and to redeem the erring wherever we can. Here is a cause which justifies all the labour which may be given to it; and here the two aspects of supreme righteousness, the righteousness which seeks to strike down the evil doer, and the righteousness which seeks to redeem the sinner and the fallen, are most closely allied and may rightly be regarded as divine.

And now let us, at last, come to the inmost or most direct meaning of the prayers: "Create in me a pure heart, O God," "Purify my heart that I may serve thee in truth."

The pure heart demands or implies a certain childlikeness or simplicity. It is not the simplicity of ignorance or blinkered narrowness which is required, but the sim-

plicity of cleanness. There can be no better metaphor for the noblest character. People speak of a clean palate, and the clean palate means one that is delicately able to distinguish and discern. The clean heart is never at a loss to know the wrong, however it may be disguised. It instinctively rejects the evil. Goodness tastes good, and vice tastes nasty, throughout the pure man's life. And if the pure heart is an excellent metaphor, so too is the metaphor of the defilement of sin. Sin darkens the eyes of the soul. It coarsens our susceptibility towards the good.

It is necessary for us to realise this truth, and to take it to heart. According to an old Jewish conception and ordinance, the regular Sabbath liturgy contains few, if any, references to sin. The Sabbath was so joyful a day, it was to stand out so markedly from the rest of the week, that no prayers for pardon were recited upon it, no confessions of wrong-doing. I suppose too that sermons upon the Sabbath were not supposed to speak about iniquity and repentance. But I do not think that we can wisely maintain this tradition to-day. We are now grateful if people come once a week to synagogue or to this hall. The daily attendance at public worship has become obsolete. Therefore, unless we sometimes speak of sin, and pray for strength to win

the mastery over sin, upon the Sabbath, we are likely never (except upon the Day of Atonement) to speak or pray about it at all. I cannot help, therefore, regretting that, from a too scrupulous adherence to tradition, we did not admit into our revised Prayer-Book the blessings of the daily *Amidah*, in which we pray: "Forgive us, O our Father, for we have sinned; pardon us, O our King, for we have transgressed; for thou dost pardon and forgive. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who art gracious, and dost abundantly pardon." And again: "Cause us to return, O our Father, unto thy law; draw us near, O our King, unto thy service, and bring us back in perfect repentance unto thy presence. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who delightest in repentance."

We do not defile the Sabbath by bringing to our minds the defilement of sin. Rather do we glorify the Sabbath if it help us to draw nearer to God. And this metaphor of defilement is, as I have already hinted, no mere rhetorical figure, no unreal exaggeration, no invention of the professional priest. The impure word, deed, and thought do leave their soilure, however minute, behind them. The pure can see further into the heart of reality than the impure. The better you are, the more you appreciate and understand goodness; the further you go away from

the omnipresent God, the more difficult, humanly speaking, it is to return to him. If we believe that there is a living and real relationship between God and man, we shall also believe that the divine grace or influence or spirit—call it by what name you will—is a real factor in human attainment. How the divine spirit acts we cannot understand, nor can we disentangle the strands of action, and allocate the due share to God and man. But none the less we believe in the doctrine that in man's life the divine enters, or can enter in. But this entrance may be, it would seem, helped or hindered, and the divine aid may be welcomed or refused, realised or unrecognised, absorbed or rejected. The Psalmist says: "In (or through) thy light we see light." By which he means (as I suppose) that God's light—the light he sends and is—enables *us* to see. Not to see in a physical sense, but to see in a moral sense, to apprehend the good and the true so vividly and so accurately that the vision of them directs and controls our lives. Sin, we may then say, so darkens the windows of the soul that God's light cannot easily enter in. It may seem a hard doctrine, and assuredly it has its wonderful exceptions of every kind and degree. But the rule is even so. It might seem that it is just the erring and the sinful, the coarse and the impure, who should see

God's light best, who should possess it most, for their *need* is greatest. There is more *need* for them of God's redemption and enlightenment. But the rule is not so. It is the pure in heart who can approach nearer to God, and it is the pure in heart to whom God can draw more near. There is a mysterious and terrible truth in the verse: "With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; but with the perverse thou wilt show thyself froward." God is changeless, but his purity is for the pure.

There is a familiar adage: "To the pure all things are pure." So far as the saying has truth, it does not mean that purity is so unstainable and impenetrable an armour that those who have it can afford to dally and play with vice. We know to what depths of antinomianism the saying, thus interpreted, has led. But it means that the pure are able, amid temptation and evil, to preserve their purity, that evil, though or because it is fully recognised, touches and stains them not. They can fight it, work among it, unspotted and unharmed. It is only in this sense that we may accept the saying as true. But seeing that few of us, or, shall I say, none of us, are wholly pure, we are none of us wholly safe from the influences and contamination of evil. Therefore there is no man who can afford to

be off his guard. He who has never resisted must sometimes have succumbed. He who does not struggle forward will slip back.

Nor must it be supposed that the evil and the impurity of which I have here spoken refer only to the graver sins of the flesh, or to such primary offences as cheating, falsehood, or cruelty. The pure heart and the clear-seeing soul are also darkened and clouded by other errors than these. They are darkened by lives of worldliness, by coarse ambitions, by vulgarity, by false estimates of good and bad, by moral carelessness, by persistent pleasure-seeking, by the worship of money, by putting God and his kingdom second, by putting "the world" and its allurements first. In our Union liturgy we have included, both in a prose and verse translation, a prayer from a mediæval Jewish poet, wherein these lines occur :

> "The world is too much with me, and its din
> Prevents my search eternal peace to win.
> How can I serve my Maker when my heart
> Is passion's captive, is a slave to sin?"

Let us not make the enormous mistake of thinking that because Judaism objects to asceticism for asceticism's sake, therefore it gives countenance and approval to such worldly pleasures and aims as are not in their nature, or in the manner of pursuing and

enjoying them, susceptible of spiritual transfigurement and religious consecration. Let us not for a moment suppose that the ideas of the prayer I have just quoted are all very well for the Day of Atonement, but needless, mawkish, and meaningless for ordinary life and occupation.

"Purify our hearts to serve thee in truth." The final object of the pure heart is the service of God. The pure in heart will best realise what that service is, and in sincerity will they render it. We mean by the service of God something wider than either public or private worship in the more usual sense of these words. But even in this restricted sense, it is the pure in heart who, because they feel God most, can worship him most truly. They ascend into the hill of the Lord, and commune with their Father and their King. May we also, by earnest prayer, by singleness of purpose and sincerity of effort, go up some paces upon that holy hill; and through his light we too shall see some light.

VII

"Sanctify us by thy commandments."

In this sermon I propose to return to that Rabbinic prayer of the Sabbath *Amidah* from which I found a text on a former occasion. I then chose the noble words, "Purify our hearts to serve thee in truth." I now take up the earlier and no less striking petition, קדשנו במצותיך, "Sanctify us by thy commandments." I will not here ask what these words precisely meant to the man who wrote the prayer. It will be enough to consider what they may mean for *us*.

Few religious conceptions are more interesting than the conception of Holiness. It is a fascinating task to trace its history, and to track out its different meanings in different ages and among different creeds. On the whole, we may say that holiness is one of the satisfactory words which have gradually improved and enriched their signification. It began with the outward and the physical; it is now mainly connected with the inward

and the spiritual. It was always a term of religion, but it was not always a term of morality. Whereas, now, one of its special features of interest is that it marks, as it were, the meeting-point, it characterises the interpenetration of morality and religion. It belongs to both, and unites the twain together. No holy person is not good. But not every good person is holy. The distinguishing feature of holiness would therefore seem to reside in something which lies beyond goodness, or which at any rate is an addition to it. Speaking generally, we may also say that no holy person is not religious, but not every religious person is holy. Holiness is an ethereal quality; we must not break it upon the wheels of definition, or seek to drive it into the prison of the categories. Yet we ought to be able to form some idea of it; to approach it, though from a distance; at least to know what it excludes, if not what it exactly is. For how can we with any reasonableness desire to become holy, if we have no clear conception of it? The command, "Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy," is a fundamental requirement of our religion. If so, it must possess a meaning which we ought to be able to apprehend. How are we to become holy if we do not, roughly at any rate, know what it is we are to aim at? And what is

more important still, how are we to help our children to be holy, if we have not a good working idea of that which holiness is.

Though the good are not necessarily holy, the holy are good. What sort of goodness is wanted for holiness? The question is not easy to answer. But there are *some* ethical qualities which I feel sure that every holy man must possess. Of these humility is one. The holy man is never conceited, self-righteous, or proud. Hence if we want our children to be holy, we must beware of letting them become conceited. Why conceit is an enemy to holiness we may presently more clearly see. But the fact remains. One simple reason is that if holiness represents a lofty stage or developed flower of goodness and religion, the conceited man is almost bound to have failed to reach it. For just because of his conceit he stops half or quarter way. He thinks he is so much further than he is; he does not see the immense stretches which separate him from the ideal. In the second place, the holy man is not, I fancy, an easy-going sort of person or careless. Nevertheless, he is not a precisian. He does not worry about trifles, though he may be particular in many things which to the many seem needless. We feel that the holy man has a certain large confidence about him. Anxious scrupulosity

either in morals or religion does not belong to him.

Perhaps we can get a little nearer to him by expanding his humility. May we not say of him that he aspires? He wants to be better than he is. Do you answer: "Then he is like everybody else. For who does not want to be better than he is?" The point perhaps comes in as to the measure of the wanting. It is a question of degree. You may want a thing in the abstract, tepidly, as a matter of theory; or you may want a thing eagerly, warmly, as a matter of fact. This paradox is, I think, true: the holy man is holy because he is dissatisfied with himself, because he has a keen and constant sense of his own imperfection, of the contrast between his ideal and his performance. Without such a sense, how can there be aspiration? Though holiness is a divine attribute, and though we are bidden to be holy inasmuch as and because God is holy, yet between the holiness of God and the holiness of man there would seem to be the large difference that the one can subsist in the perfection of everlasting attainment, the other only in the process of becoming. Human holiness must be ever conscious of a beyond.

The negative side of aspiration may be construed as consciousness of sin. Holiness, as we saw, is not merely an ethical, but also

a religious quality. Thus righteousness to the holy man is not merely "good form," or conformity to the ethical standards of his environment, or the best policy, or even justice, integrity, and unselfishness, but it is something higher than all these. It is the final order or soul of the world, it is the essence of God. And, conversely, sin is not merely bad form, or dishonesty, or selfishness, but it is something deeper. It is defilement; it is separation from the divine. I feel convinced that one great mark of holiness is this fuller conception of righteousness, this fuller conception of sin. The holy man can be cheerful and merry, but he looks upon life seriously; it is for him charged with solemn meanings. He has known what it is to wrestle with his conscience; he is not sinless, but he hates his sin.

Let us pass for the moment from the holy man's treatment of himself to his conception of the outside world. It would be a sad thing if holiness were restricted to certain professions or careers. This must not be. Judaism has rightly set its face against double moralities. It has averred that holiness need not be the characteristic of a single class or require a training apart from the world. Of this a word or two later. It suffices here to insist that no respectable profession or trade is incompatible with the attainment of holi-

ness. We may not put the question aside by the easy argument: "I am an ordinary man or woman of the world. I earn my bread, I look after my family, I seek to advance in my profession; I go out into society; I manage my household. Holiness is not for me." On the contrary, holiness is very much for you. "Ye shall be holy" was not said to a class; it was not limited to the priests; neither married men nor bachelors, wives nor spinsters, were exempted. The trumpet call went forth to all: "ye shall be holy"—you and I. It is said that the busiest people have the most time, and assuredly it is not the laziest and least occupied who are the holiest. The holy man is not absolutely buried or immersed in his own profession; being the good man he is, he gives of his thought and his time to others. Yet in this unselfishness his distinctive feature scarcely lies. Rather may this be found in the touch of aloofness which in the familiar phrase makes him, though he live *in* the world, not *of* the world. And here, perhaps, we reach the kernel of the whole matter. The thoughts and home of the holy man lie partly away from earth, or at any rate away from his own immediate environment. He lives not merely for the present, but also for the future. The two ideals of which Jowett speaks in the two superb final paragraphs of his introduction to

the *Republic* are great stimulants of holiness: "The first ideal is the future of the human race in this world; the second, the future of the individual in another." Both these ideals, which at first sight seem so different, make him who feels or realises them keenly, sit a little loosely to the world. The breath of the future has touched his brow, and all things are transfigured. He is at the opposite pole from that frame of mind which can say: "After me the deluge." And these two ideals do not exclude each other; they are complementary, not antagonistic. Of the two, the hope of a future for the human race probably needs as great an effort of mind and imagination as the hope of a future life for the individual. As Jowett says: "There is as much faith in the willingness to work for an unseen future in this world as in another."

The belief in a future life is a great spring and source of holiness. The diffusion of that belief in its more spiritual, and even in its more shadowy, forms has made the distinctively holy life more possible of attainment even for those whose range of vision is very narrow, whose opportunities of varied excellence are very small. I do not mean that the results of this belief have been uniformly good, or tended always in the direction of unselfishness and sanctity; but it seems unquestionable that the doctrine has been able to irradiate the

commonest lives with a heavenly light, that it has given a glow and passion to virtue; it has turned error into sin and respectability into holiness. It is this belief which more than any other cause has made the famous adage false: "An ignorant person cannot be pious, a boor cannot be sin-fearing." Not from the fear of hell, not even from the anticipation of heaven, but because of the glory and solemnity of the hope, the transfiguring light which it throws upon the familiar scenes of our earthly life, has the doctrine of immortality been the seed-plot of holiness to all kinds of people in every class and every circumstance. It has lifted men above themselves, not in conceit, but in humility. It has made them turn back to their work not in weariness but in consolation, not in slackness but in strength. It has made the animal to fall away; it has turned even the humblest to the eternal and the divine.

"*In* the world, not *of* the world." Have we reached the end? Not quite. What remains has been partly implied, but may be drawn out a little more explicitly. What is wanting, let us ask, in the ideal man of the Book of Proverbs? The sage seems to possess all the virtues; he is just, honest, charitable, industrious, truthful, and many good things more. Yet he leaves us a little

cold. Something seems lacking, a transforming touch to quicken and redeem the whole. Partly may this something be the absence of the doctrine of the two ideals: the future of the human race in this world; the future of the individual in another. But partly it is the lack of passion. And here we have one more mark of holiness. There lies in it a touch of excess. Holiness is not a matter of rule and policy. It is not a matter, so to speak, of more or less, but of nothing and all. Holiness needs fervour. It implies a little yearning, a little strain. A man's conduct may be quite correct, but it may be quite out of place to call it holy. For sanctity demands the whole man, it includes the sense of effort, the hot consciousness of failure; the stress of struggle; the occasional glory of success. The holy man is ardent as well as temperate. He feels right and wrong more keenly than others. He loves goodness more warmly; he hates evil more passionately. Aloof from the world in one sense, he is thoroughly *in* it in another. He is intensely alive on earth, even though his true home cannot be elsewhere than in heaven.

Perhaps some of you may think that holiness, if it means all this, is likely to involve a grain of extravagance or to fall into ill-regulated enthusiasm. For this

reason, and to avoid the danger, we shall do well to remember the other half of the words of our text. "Sanctify us through thy commandments." We must obtain sanctification not through the vagaries of our own fancy, but through recognised and lawful channels, through what we conceive to be the commandments of God. We are not to run away from, or neglect the ordinary duties and avocations of ordinary men and women, but we are to do them in such a way, with such relative stress and in such a spirit, as *through* the doing of them to find our sanctification. Holiness is thus, on the one hand, made more easy, on the other hand, more difficult. It is made more easy because no one is to think that his way of life need prevent him from attaining it; it is made more difficult because there is no special sphere or field, marked out and defined, within the limits of which holiness, if one enters that field, can surely be won. We have to become holy in and through our usual lives, although this by no means implies that some actions do not more lead to holiness than others, or that it does not matter what we do, but only how we do it. We are not to seek holiness at the cost of our fellow-men. The wisest service of man is also the most right way of seeking personal sanctification.

If holiness is the greatest distinction of character for ourselves, it is also the greatest distinction of character for our children.

Yet in trying to reach a noble end, we may make many blunders on the road. We do not want to be prigs ourselves; we do not want our children to be prigs. We must avoid everything which is not quite sincere, and which therefore to others, even if only slightly to ourselves, may savour of cant. It is a legitimate desire that our children should be happy, that, as we say, they shall have "a good time" while they can, before the cares and sorrows of manhood and womanhood damp their merriment and jollity. It may be doubted whether we do not push this desire to extremes, and even defeat its end by weakening character, and thus making the trials of life harder to bear when they come in later years, but in itself the desire is justifiable and right. But now we must see whether, even with these provisos and warnings, we may not do something for holiness.

Remembering the qualities which go to make it up, we can first of all take care that our households shall be places where conceit shall not be allowed to enter. Humble we can all be, and not merely humble intellectually. We can cultivate a moral humility as well, which shall be the basis for aspiration upon

the one hand, and for a healthy consciousness of imperfection upon the other. This can be done partly by example, partly also by talk and teaching. We are a little too apt to ridicule the doctrine that we are "miserable sinners." Like everything else, that doctrine can be made to wear a silly, exaggerated, and untruthful aspect; but it is not without its value and its validity. Compared with the ideal, we *are* sinners, and as a matter of fact all of us sin. It cannot be right to accuse ourselves of sin on the Day of Atonement; to ignore or deny sin at all other seasons. Either we make false statements then, or what is true then is true now. I venture to affirm that the moral consciousness of imperfection, the religious consciousness of sin, ought gradually to be awakened in us all. Our children should feel that their parents are conscious how much they fall behind and below the ideal, how greatly they wish and want to be better than they are. Let them also think that their parents are good people by all means. If they believe that these very parents whom they regard as good are humble-minded, conscious of imperfection, failure, and sin, anxious to do better and be better, this double impression will surely help *them* to remain humble, help them to aspire, help them to confess their errors to God and

ask strength from him whereby to conquer them.

Another quality we recognised in holiness was a certain detachment. This too can be taught by precept or example. Children will soon notice what it is which is regarded as of prime importance by their elders, and what it is which takes a secondary place. They observe our ideals. They absorb or criticise our ambitions. If these are sordid and common, there is less chance for holiness to grow. There *may* lurk a danger in excess of comfort; there *certainly* lurks danger in luxury. If we would have our children become holy, they must observe that we have interests over and above ourselves, and cares over and above our own earthly well-being. They must observe that we have interests in what lies outside us, in what will continue to exist when we are dead. They must observe that we are ready to give up our own ease and advantage for a good which is not our own, for the happiness or improvement of others, for the welfare of the community or the state. And so far as we are interested in ourselves, the interest must be centred in our *higher* selves, our true personalities, in that aspect or part of us which may subsist after death is dead. R. Jacob said: "This world is like a vestibule before the world to come;

prepare thyself in the vestibule that thou mayest enter into the hall." I venture to think that we must so live that we seem to be not unaffected either by one ideal or the other, either the future of the human race in this world, or the future of the individual in another. It is by so living, that we shall be *in* the world, but not *of* the world, and that traces of holiness will grow up in our characters and lives.

And, lastly, our children must gradually, through precept and example, learn to love God and to commune with him. For he is the source of holiness and its exemplar. He is the origin and the goal. We look up to him and are enlightened. Through his light we see ourselves: as we see, we are shamed and humiliated, but we are also made glad and strong. It is in this wonderful combination of remorse and aspiration, both conditioned by our faith in God, that our best hope for holiness must lie. In spite of failure, we will still seek to do his will. "O God," we cry, קדשנו במצותיך, "make us holy through thy commandments."

VIII

"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."—PSALM lxxiii. 25.

I PROPOSE in the present sermon to make some observations upon the place of feeling in religion generally and more particularly in Judaism.

The rapt exclamation from the seventy-third Psalm which I have taken as a text shows us religion at a white heat of emotional intensity. A few saints and mystics in different ages and creeds have felt like the Psalmist, but their number has necessarily been limited. Religion is happily a wider influence than literature or art. Those who can love God are more numerous than those who can fully appreciate a poem such as Milton's *Paradise Lost*, or a picture such as Raphael's School of Parnassus; nevertheless the highest rungs in the religious ladder are not in any creed climbed by more than a few. There may be in this hall a few men and women who can ardently re-

echo with complete appreciation and honesty the words of the Psalmist; it is unlikely that there are many. Yet though we may be unable to appropriate them fully, we can appreciate them as an ideal. Those of us who really believe in the spiritual, and in the Lord and Source of the spiritual, are necessarily anxious to apprehend it as fully, and to draw near to its Master as closely, as our capacity will permit. We should like to be religious, not merely in the sense of observing forms, but in the higher sense of the Psalmist—in the sense of a vivid realisation of the spiritual world, of a living communion with God. In the case of art, to see as many pictures as possible is not an end which we desire: to appreciate the *great* pictures in the keenest and most intelligent manner is the aim we have in view. So too in religion. The mere multiplication of religious exercises is of no primary value: to find them real ministrants towards the spiritual, stepping-stones towards God, is to have used them as they should be used.

For who is the religious man? What does religion mean? The close connection of religion with morality has become a commonplace. It was not a commonplace once. To have wrought this inviolable bond is the supreme glory and distinction of the Hebrew prophets. Rightly proud are we of these

great and fundamental sayings: "I desire love and not sacrifice; the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings." Proud too are we of their echoes in the Psalter: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart thou, O God, wilt not despise." And we applaud and approve the affirmation: "The righteous shall see God's face." We reflect upon all the evils and the mischief, the waste, the cruelties, and the follies, the hair-splitting, the casuistry, and the formalism, the hypocrisy, the intolerance, and the aridity, which the divorce of religion from morality has produced in almost every creed. The good man, we say, be his belief or unbelief what it may, is not far from God. He possesses the root of the matter. Religion is righteousness; or, it is righteousness touched by emotion; it is purity and sanctity of life. It is not dogma; it is not belief; it is not ceremonies and observances; but it is goodness and justice; it is righteousness; it is love.

Surely in these familiar sayings there is the deepest and most unshakable truth. Nor does the reason seem far to seek. For God himself we believe to be the eternal source and consummation of Righteousness and Love, and therefore, as only the righteous can understand righteousness, and only the loving can

appreciate love, so may we truly say that only through righteousness and love can God be appreciated and understood, so far as such appreciation and understanding are possible to man. A thousand times better that religion should be too completely identified with morality than that it should not be identified enough.

Yet when this all-important proviso has been made, we are at liberty to remember that morality is not religion, and religion is not morality. The moral man is not necessarily religious; and though we would jealously maintain that the religious man must be moral, we may rightly add that he must also be something more. Religion is a wider term than morality; the religious man possesses *more* qualities than the moral man. It is in the excess over and above morality that some of the most peculiar features of religion may be found to reside.

To define religion is beyond my power and my daring. To answer the question, "Who is the religious man?" is hardly less dangerous and difficult. Yet we may provisionally, and for our present purposes, say that the most religious man is he who has the most vivid and frequent sense of the spiritual, the most vivid and constant realisation of God. The most religious man is he who feels the greatest need of communion with the Unseen,

and the greatest satisfaction in that communion; to whom the words God, soul, and spirit, are charged with the widest, deepest, and most vivid meanings.

Now realisation and communion imply a sense of nearness, perhaps also—I say it in all humility and awe—a sense of kinship or affinity. Hence to the most religious man God is something more than Judge and Ruler, Creator and Requiter. He is Father and Friend; he is near as well as far; he is the abiding, and the real, not only beyond, but also in and amid the transient and the material; he is the solution of the mystery; he is the key of the riddle. The religious man must be able to appreciate and re-echo the famous lines of the poet:

> "Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
> Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

True religion, or if you prefer the words, the *highest* religion, must contain a touch of rapture, of poetry, of mysticism. The term mysticism is sometimes used with a little tincture of scorn by Jewish writers. But they are wrong. It is admitted that mysticism has its dangers and aberrations. But because it has its dangers and its aberrations, it may also have its fragrance and its truth. The highest

excellence is liable to the most terrible perversion. The most delicate charm is most quickly corrupted. The most intense realisation of religion lies close to the confines of delusion. Yet we must not interpret this to mean that religion is not real and that its objects are not realities, but rather that the finite human mind is unable to grasp the infinite, and in its attempts to do so is subject to peculiar dangers. We must not neglect the truth because of its aberration, or refuse to admit the existence of the highest because he who struggles towards it so often loses his balance and falls. There *is* a top to a mountain, and the view from the top is the fairest, even although few persons can mount to the top, or when they have reached it, can remain there in safety. And, again, though few can reach the top, yet it may be good to advance towards it, and to hear what those can tell us who have arrived and seen. So, too, the rapture of the mystic may be the truest and highest religion; even although it may not be within our power to feel it ourselves, it may help and purify us to hear of it from others whose spirits have climbed unto heights where ours could not healthfully breathe. Judaism, too, has had its mystics, who have drawn very close to God. By mysticism, following the definition of the late Master of Balliol, I

would mean, "not the extravagance of an erring fancy, but the concentration of reason in feeling, the enthusiastic love of the good, the true, the one, the sense of the infinity of knowledge and of the marvel of the human faculties."

The truly religious man can personally realise the poetry and fervour of the Psalmist: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is nought upon earth that I desire beside thee"; or again, "As the hart *panteth* after the water brooks, so *panteth* my soul after thee, O God"; or, "Thou hast been my help; in the shadow of thy wings do I rejoice"; or, "With thee is the fountain of life; in thy light do we see light."

Religion demands its poetry, I would even say its extravagance. Let it indeed draw earth up to heaven, and invest the common with a spiritual and unearthly light; but beware lest you reverse the process, and divest the spiritual of its radiance, and drag down the heavens unto the earth. Above all, for those of us who are prosperous and comfortable, and whose faith is not given the stimulus of persecution, religion must not be jejune and arid, it must not be purely intellectual, or as a living and sustaining force it will inevitably fade away. The religion which merely appeals to our understanding will not keep us sensitive to

the message of the spiritual in days of comfort and prosperity; and even when sorrows and difficulties befall us, such an inadequate religion, which does not speak to and kindle our feelings, may not enable us to master our sorrows and to purify our wills. It is only the religion of the greater psalmists which can fully serve our turn both in trouble and in joy.

Religion, like many another excellence, may be regarded as a mean between two extremes. Not a mean in one sense, because of right or good religion you cannot have too much, just as you cannot have too much bravery or too much self-control, but a mean in the sense that it is, as it were, balanced between a defect upon one side and a defect upon the other. Some religions are nearer to one extreme, and some to another. Perhaps, too, it may be said that there is not only one pair of defects but several. The pair which I have now in view are the defects associated with what is called Deism on the one hand, and with what is called Pantheism on the other. The religious defects of Deism are cold aridity and meagreness. God is the Creator rather than the Spirit of the world; the Judge rather than the Father. The relation of God to the world and to man is inadequately explained, and the highest human feelings are either unaccounted for or

starved. The religious defects of Pantheism are that it may tend to the obliterating of fundamental moral distinctions, to the weakening of the sacred tie which links religion and morality together. It may also lead, on the one hand, to vague dreaming and barrenness, on the other hand to morbidity and vice. Judaism is far more inclined to the safer and more sober defects of Deism than to the excesses of pantheistic speculation. It is therefore to the defects of Deism that I have alluded to-day. These defects are, as I have already indicated, more likely to come to the front, or even to exist at all, in days of prosperity than in adversity, in days of criticism than in days of unquestioning faith, for those to whom the national aspect of Judaism is of small attraction or even a stumbling-block than for those to whom that aspect is full of meaning and vitality. Therefore it is likely that these defects are worth talking about for many who are present to-day.

For the inadequacies and defects of a Deistic point of view were, and even still are, counteracted in Judaism by influences and agencies of a non-religious character. National tribulation brought God near; persecution supplied, and, alas, supplies, a high motive for religious fervour and intensity. The mystic element of religion was introduced and main-

tained less by the close inwardness of the relation of God to the individual than by his peculiar and special relation to Israel. Thus a single and difficult verse in a late chapter of Isaiah formed the basis for much comforting mysticism—I mean the verse which declares: "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old." The poetry, the *élan*, the romance, the glow, the intensity of religion were all largely supplied by that intimate relation of God to Israel and of Israel to God, which, as one must frankly avow, it is now impossible to maintain. For that relation went beyond the doctrine that the Jews are consecrated to a peculiar mission: it implied that God loved them with a peculiar love; it implied that his spirit was immanent in Israel, that his presence accompanied Israel, in an unusual and extraordinary manner. Directly the modern doctrine, preached, so far as I am aware, in orthodox and reform synagogues alike, is attained and accepted that God is equally near to and cares equally for all mankind, then the mystic glow of the old conception of his peculiar relation to Israel tends to diminish and disappear.

What we have therefore to do is to replace the *means* and to maintain the *result*. The

mystic relation of God to Israel must be partially replaced by the close and mystic relation, at least potentially, of every individual soul to the divine Father. Our religion must appeal to our feeling as well as to our reason: the touch of poetry, of enthusiasm, and of rapture must be achieved, while at the same time the inviolable union of morality with religion must remain unmolested and secure.

How are we to obtain this warmth and fervour in our own personal religion? How are we likely to help our children to secure it? How are we to train them so that, when grown up, they may repeat with some approach to conviction the mystic utterances of the greater psalmists? How are they to feel concurrently the mystery of the world and its perpetual solution in God? How are they to become vividly conscious of the spiritual within them and around them? This seems to me the deepest problem of religious education, perhaps we might say of education generally and as a whole. I commend it to your attention and thought.

One or two points only may be noted here. Wonder, say Plato and Aristotle, is the parent of philosophy. We may perhaps also regard it as the parent of religion. The sense of wonder, of awe, of the mysterious, is a necessary preliminary and accompaniment to the

higher religious feelings. The love of nature must lead to the love of God, not merely regarded as the author, but rather as the spirit of nature. We must seek to prepare such an attitude of mind in our children as will enable them to appreciate the nature poetry of Wordsworth. They must come to find a meaning in the familiar lines :

> "I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts: a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,
> And rolls through all things."

And again it must not be to them a mere poetic figure when Mrs. Browning exclaims :

> "Earth's crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God;
> But only he who sees, takes off his shoes; the rest sit round it and pluck blackberries."

Through nature to God must be our goal as well through goodness to God. So too in every aspect of life: the sense of wonder must be kept alive and fresh.

For a later stage of development it were greatly to be wished that good translations were made of the best specimens of Jewish

mystical literature both in ancient and in modern times. Too often those who wish to find food for the religious imagination must look and turn to non-Jewish sources. It does not matter if a certain amount of adaptation be requisite. The means by which the mediæval Kabbalist and the modern Chasid raised their souls to God, and revelled in spiritual communion with him, would not be the same as ours. But we could use them for our own purposes. We could translate them into more modern equivalents. We could employ them for our own needs. Their writings would at least show us, first, that Judaism and mysticism are not necessarily opposed to each other; secondly, that religion is not exhausted when we live decent lives of moral respectability, and even read and say our prayers with punctual regularity. Such lives and such prayers are desirable, but they are not the consummation and flower of religion.

Religion is higher than morality, but only if it includes morality. If it does this, then it can react as it were upon all life, and lift those who possess it into a higher sphere of existence. They who have felt the presence of God within them seem to be raised above the commoner difficulties of belief. It does not matter much to them who wrote a particular book or whether a supposed miracle

actually took place. They have passed beyond these questions, so far as religion is concerned, and they have reached a higher certitude. The spiritual is for them a fact which they have personally realised ; it hardly admits of argument or analysis.

Then, too, sorrow and joy are great instruments for making men susceptible to religion. Both the higher joys and the higher sorrows may be looked upon and used as pathways towards the spiritual. As regards sorrow this may seem obvious, but is it not also true of joy? For joy as well as sorrow may open our ears and our eyes more fully, and make us realise better the hidden meanings of the world. So Wordsworth, in the same wonderful poem from which I have already quoted, speaks of how

> "With an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the heart of things."

When joy and sorrow have brought us a little nearer to the influence of religion, religion must, in its turn, sanctify and unify our sorrows and our joys, so that we may appreciate them the better and realise their spiritual import more fully. Life closely connected with religion will make religion more real and strong : religion closely connected with life will make life more pure and holy.

It may also be suggested whether a greater simplicity of life is not necessary for the due perception of the spiritual. "This is the way," said the Rabbi, "that is becoming for the study of the Torah: a morsel of bread with salt shall thou eat, and water by measure must thou drink; thou must sleep upon the ground, and live a life of trouble, the while thou toilest in the Torah." The greatest teachers of religion, the purest seekers after God, the most exalted mystics, have almost always, and in almost every creed, tended towards a certain measure of asceticism. We cannot afford to neglect this fact of history. Tied we are, most of us, to the rules and habits of the society in which we live; few of us have the courage to break away from them. But let us at least see that they do not so hold us in bondage that we become wholly unable to hear the voices of the unseen world.

> "Such harmony is in immortal souls;
> But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it."

Yet we can, even on earth, purge this vesture from some of its mud. "Clean hands and a pure heart" shall alone go up into the holy place; we may even say, shall alone realise that there *is* a holy place to which one *can* go up. Judaism is right in holding that it is a nobler thing to make sense serve soul than to root

out sense altogether. But we are not to understand by that that mere sensuous pleasure is to be regarded as in itself of ethical and religious value. It is only *then* of value when it is held in restraint and purified under the influence and commands of morality and religion. Other things being equal, it is he who lives the simple and severe life who is likely to see more deeply and vividly into the spiritual realities of the world.

A fringe of a great subject has been touched upon. It is very difficult to allude to it without using language which may seem exaggerated or unreal. Of those, too, who, like the present speaker, perceive from afar an ideal, into the presence of which they have themselves not entered, the words are halting and inadequate. But one may intensely believe in an ideal, although one may be unable to realise it oneself. One may intensely believe in an excellence which one does not possess. The next best thing to having a virtue yourself is to recognise, to admit, and to reverence it in others. Some persons are too inclined to deny the reality of feelings which they themselves do not possess. Some are inclined to throw doubt or even derision upon religious emotion and mysticism. I would beg of you not to fall into this foolish blunder. You may not yourself appreciate music, but you would

admit that its spiritual joys are an intense reality. So too with religion. Its joys are real; its mystic fervours are actualities. If we once get convinced of that, this very conviction will help us on our way. It will assist us with our children; it will aid us in our spiritual development. For while some have by nature a better grasp of spiritual things than others and a deeper appreciation of them, all of us require spiritual training and discipline, and none of us who submit to and seek for that training, none of us who humbly ask that God will reveal himself to them, will always and wholly fail in their quest.

IX

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."—PSALM li. 10.[1]

THE fifty-first Psalm is in many respects the greatest in the Psalter. It is undoubtedly the greatest of all the Psalms which deal with the subject of sin and of repentance. Its last two verses, which stand in such marked contradiction to the lofty spirituality of the remainder, form a painful anti-climax; but, purified of this appendix, printed as the Psalm is on page 63 of our Prayer-Book, it is one of the glories of our Bible and our liturgy. It is a Psalm we should all do well to know by heart, either in the original Hebrew or in English. I almost feel as if I should do better to read it to you two or three times over instead of preaching a sermon. It contains the essence of the whole story.

The short penitential season is nearing its close and its climax. The Sabbath of

[1] This sermon was preached upon the so-called Sabbath of Repentance, two days before the Day of Atonement, which fell on a Monday.

repentance is this year only separated by a day from the Day of Atonement itself. For various reasons it is undesirable or impossible for us to hold a service upon the Day of Atonement. We have to restrict our services to Sabbath afternoons. But in many respects the feelings and thoughts which this particular Sabbath suggest and arouse are very similar to those which are suggested by the Day of Atonement, and therefore I propose to speak to you to-day very much as I would speak were we met together for prayer and meditation next Monday.

The first point that I would ask you to notice about the Day of Atonement is its curious combination of the outward and the inward—in other words, of the letter and the spirit. It is from one point of view extremely outward. For a long time upon Sunday evening, for the whole day upon Monday, a vast quantity of people will be gathered together in halls and synagogues, listening to or reciting an endless string of prayers and hymns. A very large percentage of these people will abstain from food and drink for twenty-four or twenty-five hours. Can one imagine anything more external, more outward, more formal? And yet most of us know that all this is only a shell, a mere outer envelope, of no value at all and of no meaning, unless it cover and

enshrine something inward and spiritual. And that inward something exists. For, from another and equally accurate point of view, the Day of Atonement is extremely inward and spiritual. It records and celebrates no past event; it has nothing to do with history; it depends upon no incident in the past or in the life of the community. It has only to do with what is purely inward and spiritual, with what is general and universal. For it is the festival of the human soul. Its subject-matter is nothing outward and visible; it is the descent and the ascent of the soul, its sins and its struggles, its contrition and its repentance, its alienation from God and its striving for atonement with him —it is these impalpable and inward realities with which alone it has to deal. It has no other meaning and no other purpose.

The old Rabbis knew this. None keener than they about externalities—far too keen were they, as many of us think to-day. And yet their keenness for externalities did not blind them to the root of the matter, to the essence, to the spirit, to the inward reality. How well this comes out both in some of their sayings and in the selections which they made from the prophets to be read upon the Atonement Day. The famous 58th chapter of Isaiah laughs an outward fast to scorn. It goes so far as to say that the true fast is

one in which food is set before the hungry; that the false fast is one in which a man afflicts his soul. And from the Book of Jonah, the other prophetical lesson for the day, the Rabbis themselves were at pains to draw out the moral, or *one* moral, of the tale. Not, they tell us, because the Ninevites fasted and were covered in sackcloth did God forgive them, but because they turned from their evil way and from the violence of their hands. For Joel, the Rabbis held, was right when he said, "Rend your heart, and not your garments." So thought and acted the Rabbis, the great externalists in one sense, the great spiritualists in another. No less remarkable is the famous sentence of theirs in which the superstitions which had collected around the Day of Atonement, and which, alas, still attend and disfigure it, were shattered, for those who can understand and appreciate, at a single blow: "He who says, I will sin and the Day of Atonement will bring me forgiveness, for him the Day of Atonement brings no forgiveness." The day, in other words, has nothing magical about it. It is not a question of so much praying and so much forgiveness, so much fasting and so much atonement. It is a spiritual day, not a conjuring trick. God does not work by magic or compulsion or by caprice, but by righteousness and yet by grace, by grace and

yet by law. The old Rabbis saw deep into the heart of things, in spite of their casuistry, in spite of their hair-splitting and externalities.

The first condition of atonement must be contrition. This is what the Psalmist says: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Real remorse, regret, sorrow—these are the obvious forerunners of amendment, whether we believe in God or no. The great difficulty about regret and remorse is that they are so apt to be slight and ephemeral. It is so easy to *think* one feels regret. We are like the children who tread upon our toes and say, "I am *so* sorry"; five minutes later they do it again. Such sorrow is almost valueless. It is a mere momentary spasm, a sort of reflex of the bad action itself; a salve; a luxury; it has little moral worth or meaning. It would be wrong to say that it were better to sin boldly without such flimsy, flabby, maudlin repentance, for even the false remorse may pass into the true. But the only sorrow which is of real avail is the sorrow which can, as it were, run up into character, and hence pass off into action. There may even be some danger in the cheap and spurious sorriness. For there are cases of moral weakness, of constant yielding to solicitation and temptation, where each fall is regularly followed by the same feeble

sorriness, a sorriness which can have small, if any, value in the eyes of either man or God. The remorse follows the deed as the night follows the day; but even as the night cannot prevent the coming of the next day, so does the regret not prevent the repetition of the deed. And as this regular regret after the event is valueless, so too is valueless the annual comprehensive and inclusive regret upon the Day of Atonement. Such regret, such repentance, if it does not take effect upon character, must seem to God no more than that sorriness of the child who treads upon our toes, and repeats the offence at the next opportunity.

So far we have considered a condition of atonement which is not specially characteristic of its religious side. It would be conceivable to have a Day of Atonement which would be purely ethical. It might be of real ethical use to set a day apart on which we thought over our faults, on which we tried to put them before ourselves in their true meanness, impurity, folly, and contemptibility, on which, gazing steadily and long at these faults in their naked ugliness, we felt a horror of them, a hatred of them, a bitter remorse that we had committed them. From such hatred and remorse a fixed resolve not to commit these faults again might be born within us, which would usefully and even power-

fully affect our action for good in the days to come. Such a Day of Atonement would be purely ethical, and so far as it went, it might be of value. But it would not be religious. It would, therefore, be a very different day from that which we are to celebrate on Monday. May I now seek to draw out in greater detail wherein the differences between the two days—the one purely ethical, the other religious — may be supposed to consist?

First of all, then, it is not merely *faults* which we have committed, but *sins*. We have not only done wrong against our fellow-men or against our better, truer selves, but we have sinned against God; we have sinned against the Holy One. Those who believe in a Holy God, the living and self-conscious Ideal of Righteousness and Love, cannot look upon iniquity in the same way as those who do not believe in him. The lives of some unbelievers put the lives of many believers to shame; all honour to them that, where there can be no profounder conception of sin, there can yet be so much righteousness; all shame to us that, with all our belief in the Holy God, there is yet so much hypocrisy and sin. But the fact remains: righteousness is deepened and sin is deepened if God exists. Sin is fouler; righteousness more holy. Graver issues are involved in well-doing and

evil-doing. What if God use our souls in other lives? What if we live again? What if our soul is stained with sin at the hour of death, at the hour which may be near for any of us, and which for none of us can really be far? We lack imagination; we lack hard thinking; we are therefore unable or unwilling to realise the truth. Otherwise we ought to find in the conception of sin as pollution of soul, in the conception of it as an offence against the Holy One, as an inevitable severance and estrangement from the Father in Heaven, a more powerful preventive from wrong-doing, if not a more urgent incentive to righteousness, than now we do. We have to think of sin as a *personal* wrong-doing: we have hurt the purity, we have offended the holiness of God. Nor is it unpermissible, I think, to go a step farther. We dare not pry into the mystery of the divine nature, but the keenest religious teachers have urged us to believe that within the infinite richness of the divine character there is emotion as well as thought and will. You will remember a famous phrase in Isaiah, enormously elaborated in the Talmud: "In all their affliction he was afflicted." But surely if God grieves over our afflictions, he grieves far more over our sins. He grieves when the law of his being and of ours makes us far from him and him far from us; when the measure of

the Holy Spirit within us is perforce diminished by our sin. Let us think of these things, which may be difficult, but are not fictions; they may help us in our battle with temptation, in our struggle for righteousness and light.

But some of you may perhaps be impatient. You may say, the real big difference between the ethical and religious Day of Atonement is simply this. In an ethical Day of Atonement there would be nobody of whom to ask forgiveness. On the religious Day of Atonement we ask God to forgive us our sins. We ask for something to happen; we ask for something we hope to get. In this distinction there is truth, but the teaching it implies has pitfalls for the unwary. What do we mean by forgiveness? The word may bear an internal or an external sense. If a child asks his father to forgive him, the request may mean either to let him off an expected punishment for a committed offence, or not to feel annoyed and angry with him any longer. The former is external, the latter internal forgiveness. Can we apply either of these meanings to our relations with God? The external sense is certainly inappropriate. It seems almost ridiculous to ask God to remit the punishment due to us for our sins, whether this punishment is expected by us in this world

or in another. For, in the first place, the punishment is either for our good or for our harm. If for our harm, it will not be inflicted, for God is righteous, not vindictive; if for our good, it will not be remitted, whatever in our folly and fears we may ask. And in the second place, as we have to conceive God acting by law and not by caprice, so it is very hard, I will not say impossible, to imagine any results of our sin besides those which are inevitably contained in the sin itself. Over and above the inevitable effects of many sins upon others—yes, and upon their children and children's children—which no repentance may be able to wipe away, there is the effect of sin upon ourselves. Sin makes sin. Sin makes sorrow. Sinful deeds make sinful characters. This is the true punishment of sin, and though we do not believe that it is irretrievable, nevertheless, till effaced by a stronger force — a combination of man's strength and God's strength—it is inevitable. Nothing should have a more deterrent effect upon us than a knowledge of the awful law of sin. The evil impulse—the *Yetzer ha' Ra*—becomes a heavier burden, a harder tyrant, each time we yield to its persuasion. Therefore, on the one hand, not because he is a jealous God, but because he is a God of righteous law, does he often visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the

third and fourth generation of them that hate him, and, on the other hand, not in contradiction to his goodness and his truth, but in harmony and consistency with them, is he a God who will by no means clear the guilty; *venokeh lo yenokeh.*

Nevertheless repentance is a reality and forgiveness is a reality, and though it is said of God "He will by no means clear the guilty," it is also said of him that he "forgiveth iniquity, transgression, and sin." If we can assign some meaning to the former statement, can we not, within the limits of law, find some meaning for the latter?

Recalling the internal sense of forgiveness as between a child and his father, can we apply this analogy to our relations with God? Clearly only with some modifications. The qualities of anger or annoyance are wholly ridiculous as applied to God. An angry God belongs to the past. We see now that the phrase is absurd—a contradiction in terms. When we seek forgiveness and atonement, we therefore seek something which, if truly sought, is assuredly to be found. He who is no longer wilful and unloving, who wants to be near God, who desires to repair the breach in a life of obedience to the divine commands of righteousness and love, will find the door of atonement open. If we put

or get ourselves in a condition for forgiveness, God will forgive us.

I hope that these last few sentences are neither for you nor for me a juggling with words. I believe they conform to an objective, to an actual reality, though the reality may be hard to realise. We may be helped by taking two extreme cases on either side of the moral scale. Imagine first a regularly bad man, an utter scamp, asking superstitiously for forgiveness. What harmony, what communion, what atonement can there be between such a one and God? God may pity him; he may desire to bring him near; he may wish to forgive him. But till the scamp takes the initial step of sincerely seeking atonement,—so long as his heart is hard and sinful, and he has no intention or desire to abandon his sin—God and he are necessarily sundered and separate. There can be no communion between goodness and deliberate sin. Such a man, in such a state, God cannot "forgive"; for him there can be no atonement. At the other side of the scale there is the *really* repentant man: the man whom we would fain equal, whom, let us hope, we shall, at any rate, strive to approach. Is it not evident that he has achieved his end and attained his goal? His true repentance is true forgiveness: his contrition is atonement: he is near to God,

and God is near to him. He is at peace, and no evil can touch him.

But at the risk of straining your patience, I ask you to listen to me a few moments more. For what means the prayer of our text: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; renew a right spirit within me"? It surely means that God has to do something in the process of atonement as well as man. Must we hold, we who realise and believe in the universality of Law more fully than the Psalmist, that the Psalmist is wrong? I do not think so. The human illustration of father and child fails us again, because it is again inadequate. For in that analogy we have two separated finite beings: one here, the other there. But we have not merely to think of man here, and God there. The mystery deepens; the truth is complex and difficult. God, our divine Father, is not merely there, but he is also here. God is not merely outside, above, beyond, or whatever other preposition you choose to employ. In grander language: God is not merely transcendent, he is also immanent. He is not only without, though without he is; he is also, or he may also be, within. "Cast me not away from thy presence; take not thy Holy Spirit from me." This is the inmost sanctuary, the deepest kernel, of all religion. The spirit of man can partake of, and be helped by, the

divine Spirit, the Spirit of God. It is easy to laugh at this doctrine, to mock at this mystery. For it is, I admit, quite unprovable. And yet it is an essential feature of religion, and the purer the religion, the more essential is this doctrine. This it is which most of all separates the religious Day of Atonement from any merely ethical Day of Atonement. We do pray for God to give us something. We pray to him to give us himself. It is a bold prayer. But we pray for no less. It is himself who shall enable us to conquer sin, to love righteousness and do it. Himself shall be our atonement and our peace, our victory and our strength. Towards him and for him we pray. He comes to us partly by our own effort, but he also comes to us by his own grace, by the loving law of his own nature, by the eternal outflow of his own being to those who can receive it. Let us pray, then, in all sincerity and in all faith: "Cast me not away from thy presence: take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God."

X

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."—Ecclesiastes ix. 10.

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes."—Psalm cxix. 71.

As the text for this sermon I would take two familiar Scripture verses, which have done duty as pegs for countless sermons already, and will doubtless be used as pegs for countless more. The first is from Ecclesiastes ix. 10: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might"; and the second is from the 119th Psalm, verse 71: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." And to these two I should be half inclined to add a third, a verse from Job, which was sadly meant, but can be less sadly interpreted: "Is there not a warfare to man upon the earth?"

These passages from Scripture may suggest to you the subject about which I want

to speak: the place of effort and conflict in human life, and their moral and religious worth. Ancient and modern moralists have both dealt with this theme: conflicts without the soul and conflicts within it are familiar topics to us all. The conception of life as a struggle or a warfare has been made even more common by modern theories of evolution. Little can be said which is novel upon so well worn a subject, and that little not by me. Yet it may be well from time to time to recall to our minds certain aspects of truth, which from their very obviousness are liable to be forgotten or ignored. To appreciate the conditions of our lives and of our self-development is part of that self-knowledge upon which some Greek thinkers made all moral progress to depend.

We may ask, Are struggle and effort and strenuous endeavour good things or bad? Do they belong to man in virtue of that in him which is common with the animal, or that in him which partakes of the divine? Or do they arise precisely because he is set between the two, because though he walks upon earth, he gazes and strains towards heaven? Do we struggle in order to rest? or do we not at least as much rest in order to struggle? If these questions seem puzzling, this proves that they are

worth discussion: a subject without puzzles is also without interest. Perhaps the puzzle may tend towards some rough solution if we remember that under simple words like struggle, effort, and conflict, various states of mind and various activities may be combined and included.

There is a sense in which conflict, perhaps even effort, are opposed to peace; but there is a sense in which peace and conflict can exist side by side. We cannot include effort in our poor conceptions of the divine nature, but we can surely imagine, and even believe, that in the endless activities which await the human spirit in its progress towards perfection beyond the grave, effort, though perhaps not conflict, will find a place.

Two causes give a touch of asperity and unpleasantness to effort which often veils from us its deeper value and meaning. The first is the limitations of our human nature; the second is that effort is too often associated in our thoughts with trouble, failure, and sin. But, in itself, effort, as its very etymology would imply, is rather associated with strength, activity, and achievement; and these conceptions, in their turn, are surely more consonant with our highest idea of God than that of passivity and rest. For God, says Philo, is ever active. He is strength rather than weakness; in him Being and

Doing find their eternal synthesis and harmony. We become like unto God, so far as such words can have a meaning, in doing rather than in rest; amid the warfare of life rather than through inactivity.

So highly do we reckon the excellence of strength and effort, that there is a sense in which, by way of paradox, we assert that from the strenuous sinner there is more to be hoped for than from the flabby and feeble man of virtue, as if all the glorious potentialities of human nature were directly associated with and conditioned by effort and eagerness and strength. If we do not force ourselves to remember that a man may be zealous in evil as well as in good, we should, I think, be inclined offhand to allow that strenuousness was one of the most obvious, as well as one of the most essential, of human virtues. Whether the good angel is strenuous may be argued; that the good man is strenuous admits of no doubt. I put aside for a moment the further question whether strenuousness causes joy or pain, or whether, if long continued, the pain is turned into pleasure. However this may be, the fact remains that slackness almost changes virtue into vice, while strenuousness almost changes vice into virtue.

A big problem in education is: How can we best make our children strenuous? and

how can the strenuousness of childhood be best likely to continue, deepened and purified, into manhood and womanhood? In his notable book called *Talks to Teachers*, in which, whether one agrees or no, there is never a page which fails to arrest attention, Professor W. James touches on the question whether rivalry and emulation, in spite of their ethical dangers, must not be judiciously employed to quicken the springs of effort. Even pride and pugnacity, he argues, in their more refined and noble forms, may possess, in the formation of some characters, their uses and justification. "We have of late," he says, "been hearing much of the philosophy of tenderness in education; 'interest' must be assiduously awakened in everything, difficulties must be smoothed away. Soft pedagogics have taken the place of the old steep and rocky path to learning. But from this lukewarm air the bracing oxygen of effort is left out. It is nonsense to suppose that every step in education *can* be interesting. The fighting impulse must often be appealed to. Make the pupil feel ashamed of being scared at fractions, of being 'downed' by the law of falling bodies: rouse his pugnacity and pride, and he will rush at the difficult places with a sort of inner wrath at himself that is one of his best moral faculties. A victory scored under such conditions becomes a

turning-point and crisis of his character." The same man writes this who also preaches in the same book what he calls the gospel of relaxation. For the right relaxation is but the complement of the right strenuousness. "Every good that is worth possessing," says the Professor, "must be paid for in strokes of daily effort." And so, as one of his practical maxims about life and habits he offers this: "Keep the faculty of effort alive in you by a little gratuitous exercise every day."

The lack of the capacity of being strenuous, of making effort, shows itself, perhaps not unnaturally, most readily where there is least outward pressure and spur. The desire for advancement, the compulsion of necessity, drives a man on to show some degree of strenuousness in his business or profession. But where these motives cease to operate, slackness often sets in. And thus we may to some extent account for slackness in religion, which deals with the spiritual and the unseen. We are in religion almost entirely dependent (as it would seem) upon ourselves. Religion, therefore, perhaps serves as a kind of measure of our strenuousness; of our capacity for effort. In any case, no man's religion is worth much which is not characterised by effort. This may seem a hard saying. For, it may be urged,

is not religion the source of peace? Do we not seek in religion a refuge from the bustle and turmoil of the world? Do we not bring our cares and anxieties before God, and in communion with him seek rest? Are we not bidden to rest upon the Sabbath day, and to spend part of our rest in the repose of worship and prayer? There is some confusion of thought in these questions, but if they represent the objections which any one here present might feel to the course of my argument, they deserve to be dealt with and answered.

Religion is indeed to be a refuge; the peace of God is no empty phrase. But this peace cannot be reached without effort; it is not a peace of sloth, passivity, and torpor. The mind is withdrawn from the bustle of daily life, but it is not inactive. The best and most fruitful prayer involves sustained effort; it cannot be kept up for long at a time; hence the unsuitability of too lengthy religious services. Thus we need strenuousness in religion first of all when we pray. The habit, the power, of concentrated attention will stand us here in the greatest stead. Slipshod slackness will here be most easily made manifest. The value of prayer increases with its intensity. Other qualities have doubtless also to be taken into account, but the purest prayer,

the noblest worship, slackly rendered and offered, can be of little spiritual profit to us. Before it is too late, I would suggest that we all try if we can pray hard, if only for a few moments; the slack prayer is very easy, but very useless. Above all things, let there be no mockery and unreality in our relations with God. And in the second place, we want strenuousness in religious thought and religious action. An eager opponent of religion is almost better than a slack adherent; and certainly we may make this antithesis about the opponents and adherents of the Jewish Religious Union. Slack adhesion savours of irresponsibility and want of perception. For the Union is, I think, either greatly right or thoroughly wrong; its subject is too important for indifference. Have the courage and make the effort to face facts, and to think things out, and you will find that strenuous effort, while never easy, is a condition of success in religion as in all other activities of the human mind and soul. For as regards prayer and religion, and even the very love of God, the maxim applies: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

Throughout the moral, and indeed it might be said, throughout much of the physical world, effort seems the necessary

predecessor to achievement. And in the realm of conscious human action effort needs keenness. It is difficult to be strenuous if one is not keen. The one seems constantly to imply the other. But how, it may be asked, is effort the same as conflict? What is the relation of effort to pain?

Aristotle long ago pointed out that there is a certain pleasure in the activities of body and mind. And indeed when one comes to think of it, there is a wonderful admixture or proportion of pleasure and pain in human effort and labour. With much effort there must be pain; but with much effort there is also joy. In the successful overcoming of resistance the process as well as the accomplishment are accompanied with satisfaction and pleasure. There are joys which are three parts pain; but there are pains which are three parts joy. The slack man never realises some of the highest thrills of pleasure of which human nature is capable.

It cannot be said that effort destroys effort, for there is no end to achievement, and as one summit is climbed, another opens out to our view. But it is true that painful effort tends to transform itself into joyous effort, and slow and difficult struggle tends to become eager and even delightful activity. This is the real reward of effort; the reward which is the best and most

divine of all rewards; the reward, that is, which lies in the very act itself, which is bound up with the doing of it and wants and knows nothing beyond or external to itself. As eager action seems more divine than passive repose, so this internal reward seems akin to the satisfaction with which God welcomed his own activities: "Behold they were very good."

But there are other kinds of effort and struggle than these: there are efforts where the resistance, or the resistant material to be overcome, is not outward, but inward; where the struggle is not seemingly with the *thing*, but with the *self*. There are the cases where, for example, the action which duty bids us do is tedious or unpleasant, or where the better alternative is more painful, combined perchance with self-sacrifice and self-denial. Here effort passes into conflict; the conflict of the higher self with the lower, the conflict, as we often roughly phrase it, of duty with desire.

But we may also call this conflict the struggle for emancipation and liberty. The soul is at war; there is civil strife within it, and the question is on which side shall the conquest be. The fight for freedom is the fight for righteousness; it may also be described as the fight for peace. Spiritual freedom is not the privileged

possession of that man whose soul is the theatre of contending passions; but, on the other hand, the higher or highest peace is perhaps only known to those who have passed through the stages of conflict and struggle.

At any rate we may safely assert that every human life must know more or less frequently the conflict between good and evil, better and worse, activity and indolence, pleasure and pain. There are some serene and radiant souls who, one cannot help believing, must have known little of these struggles; for whom the right activity has been the wished-for activity, and the path of duty has been the path of desire. But we cannot see into the recesses, and we cannot learn the inward history, of another soul, and it is doubtful how far any can escape the combat, and yet achieve the crown. And though to some a certain measure of righteousness may be easier than to others, there must come a stage to all when facility ceases and struggle begins. It is just at this point where character will show itself. Human nature being what it is, it does not suffice for any of us to reach only that level and limit of righteousness which we can reach easily. It may be laid down as an almost universal rule that we should all push forward to the point where struggle and conflict are necessary and in-

evitable. Hence we see the urgent need for keeping alive in ourselves the power of effort, the capacity for struggle. We see also the place and function of conflict in human life and human righteousness. Conflict and struggle are not ends in themselves; they are the necessary means to ends greater than they. It is better to be good with ease than to be good with difficulty; it is better, to take a homely example, to refrain from getting drunk with complete facility than to refrain with constant effort. But if one province of virtue is open to us, another is still closed, and the gates of it must be stormed in battle. If we need not struggle for the possession of one virtue, there is so much the better chance for the conquest of another. To all of us conscience and thought will indicate degrees and kinds of righteousness and knowledge, where energy and effort, and even conflict and struggle, are the conditions of attainment. Through conflict to serenity; through struggle to peace.

Finally, we have to bear in mind that there is a deeper and darker aspect of the matter, and yet one no less truthful than any that have so far been considered. For beyond the struggle with mere disinclination or laziness lies the struggle with sin, just as beyond the struggle with bothers and difficulties lies the struggle with calamity and evil. From

these sterner aspects of life we have no business to shut our eyes. "Is there not a warfare to man upon the earth?" "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes." But adversity is only then a blessing when we have fitted ourselves to grapple with it, and when through and from the struggle we can issue forth victorious, — neither seared nor crushed; neither soured nor perverse; neither weakened nor crooked; but upright, stronger, keener, and more serene.

Life and life's goal, righteousness and the Source of righteousness, if they be not either products of chance or visions of fancy, are realities so tremendous that none of us should pass through our days—even apart from the events that befall us—without moments of sombre reflection, of hard and painful thought. And if righteousness is a big reality, so too, though in a different sense, is sin. Not without reason and justification has the phrase been coined: "to wrestle with sin." For this is the fiercest wrestling match, the sternest contest. Into the lists of this combat we none of us can refuse to enter; there is hardly any soul so strong and pure and saintly that it need never have knowledge of that arena. The law of righteousness is stern: we must recognise that we are subject to it; we must struggle to

obey it. Only through that recognition and struggle can we pass forth from time to time into the higher peace, wherein God himself acts and rests in everlasting unity and glory.

XI

"The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."—NUMBERS vi. 26.

"He maketh peace in his high places."—JOB xxv. 2.

IT was a profound truth which Aristotle enunciated and illustrated when he explained that virtue lay in a mean. Between two false and objectionable extremes lies the golden middle. Courage is opposed to rashness, on the one hand, and to cowardice on the other. Temperance may be contrasted with incontinence and with asceticism. But, as the great philosopher is also at pains to point out, virtue is not a mean in the sense that there need be little of it, or that it betokens a cold, feeble, and halting temper or mind. It is a mean, but it is also an excess. Or rather, there cannot be too much of it. A man may be too foolhardy, but he cannot be too brave. From another point of view, virtue can be regarded as a reconciliation of opposites. The truly generous man, we should say, is not foolishly generous. The

charitable man thinks not merely of the present distress before his eyes, but of future consequences. And so on. The more perfect a man is, the more he can reconcile in his action and his character opposing tendencies and claims. He knows how to harmonise self-sacrifice with self-culture. He finds a place for convention, but he rises above convention. He most emphatically is not conceited, but he does not effect less than he can from a too constant misapprehension of his own capacities. The perfect man, as we say, is not one-sided, though we also recognise and remember that much of the world's progress is due to one-sidedness. The danger of harmony and reconciliation and all-roundness is that it may tend to stagnation. A perfect balance may end in lack of movement. The better is sometimes the enemy of the good.

These general thoughts may be illustrated by the particular subject which I desire to bring before you to-day. It is a very simple subject, but it is a very important subject, and to some extent it affects us all.

Of the varied gifts and graces which we ask God to grant us, or to aid us to obtain, none figures more frequently in the Jewish liturgy than peace. Now, in the more external sense of the word, the reason for this frequent prayer is painfully obvious.

That God in this sense may grant peace to the land in which the greater number of our brethren dwell, and to all those who dwell within it, must be our fervent prayer. And yet even in the external sense there may be some limitation. For we do not desire the peace of mere repression, the peace of death. In other words, we distinguish, even here, between a right peace and a wrong peace, like the prophets of old who denounced those who cried Peace, when there was no peace.

But it is not of this more external peace that I want to speak to-day. I do not want to speak of the peace of communities, but of peace and strife in the lives of individuals. The excellences of contentment have been often sung. We are to be satisfied with our lot; we are not to repine; we must not desire the impossible, and so on. Nothing is more familiar than all this, and nothing more commonplace. Yet, at the same time, we are only a little less familiar with the very opposite, or apparently the very opposite, teaching. We have often heard of a noble discontent. If there were too much satisfaction and content, would civilisation, as we know it, have come into being? Why should a man be contented with his lot if he can improve it? Should we rest content with evil, with imperfection? And may

not different people take different views of imperfection? Is not the progress of the world dependent upon strife and friction and conflict? In one of the prayers which is often read in this hall, the writer has coined the phrase, "a healthy discontent." It is true that he means by it a discontent with ourselves, with our own degree of moral achievement; but the phrase shows at all events that there are phases of discontent which may even wear the aspect of religion. A contented person may connote one who is by no means an agreeable kind of individual. He may be a regular Philistine: he may be sleek, smug, and self-satisfied. He may have no eye for the sorrows and evils of the world around him, no conception of his own moral insensibility and imperviousness. It might be supposed that the ideal is that a man should work hard, and yet be contented, and the reconciliation may indeed lie in this direction. But it cannot be so simply expressed—the truth is not so easy—for a man may be a hard and constant worker, but the content which accompanies his work may be only the product of conceit, of coarseness of fibre, of blinkered narrowness. Much searching of heart can hardly be absent from the life of him who has climbed to high levels of spiritual and moral attainment. The higher peace—may it not

be said?—can only be purchased at the expense of conflict; the higher calm can only be reached by those who have known strife.

Yet here, too, we feel that the truth is not quite fully or adequately expressed. For there must be a concurrence and simultaneity of virtues as well as a sequence of them. And, indeed, there must be a certain *simultaneity* of opposites, as well as a transition from the one to the other. We may roughly speak of the appropriate excellences of youth and of age. We may say that eager striving and restless conflict beseem youth and middle age, while rest and contentment befit the close of life, when a man may, as it were, pause and be refreshed. This conception of life is magnificently expressed in Browning's "Rabbi ben Ezra." Nowhere is the need and justification for care, for striving, for pain, more clearly and more poetically put forward. But it is also urged that a time should come—if life be spared—when peace is legitimate, when, lifted above the strife—the struggle having so far reached its term—a man may know and be at rest. Yet we rightly feel that this mere *succession* of states or virtues is not completely satisfactory. We want something more. We want, to some extent, at every period of manhood and womanhood,

to strive and attain together; we want both struggle *and* rest. If peace is the end, it must not merely be an end deferred till the close of existence or enjoyed beyond the grave. So too, on the other hand, we feel that movement, progress and development, though not necessarily strife and struggle, can hardly be dissociated from any human or desired existence, whether in this life or in another. When we think of God himself, we can conceive him as enjoying, or as being, either perfect and continuous rest or perfect and continuous activity. That rest upon the Sabbath day which is ascribed to him may be regarded as a figure for his permanent condition; and, on the other hand, his joyous activity, as elsewhere depicted in human terms, may be also regarded as a figure for what he continually is.

Hence we see that, though peace and discontent may be opposed to each other, peace and activity are not. The highest activity may be symbolised by the machine which works with the least possible friction. It is the *friction* which is the lower human element; it is the *activity* which is divine.

Has an ethical religion anything to say about right activity and wrong? And as all human activity must be more or less accompanied by effort, by struggle, by conflict, and even by discontent, has it anything

to say as to what kinds of discontent and conflict are justified or not.

Religion and ethics would first of all, I suppose, denounce as useless and wasteful an immense amount of current activities and discontent. They would point out that much time and energy in many people's lives are now frittered away, split up into details of small and doubtful value. Many of us need concentration; our lives are not sufficiently guided and controlled by worthy aims and adequate principles. There is too much useless labour in the world, too much idle anxiety. I will not pursue the commonplaces of sermons further in this particular direction. I will not talk about false social values, the wasted activities and anxieties of pleasure-seeking. Much that is usually said upon these heads is surely quite true, but it is also very familiar. Let us rather consider the quality of restlessness itself. Is this a good thing? It would seem as if we might distinguish restlessness from tirelessness. A constant stream of activity directed to noble ends is clearly good. But this is not quite the same thing as restlessness of mind and spirit. Many persons there are who seem never to possess their own souls in quiet and collectedness. We may surely say of each one of us that, over and above our activities and our external ends, there are

our own souls, our own selves. Even if our activities are of the *highest* kind, this reflection is still true; we have still a duty to ourselves. But of how few of us can it be said that our activities, aims, and occupations are or can be of the *highest* kind? They are most of them extremely ordinary; they are not by any means, for the most of us, reprehensible; they are largely dictated by circumstance; many of them are beyond our control; but they cannot be called beautiful or ideal. All the more reason for occasional reflection, pause, concentration, *peace.* And one of the reasons why public worship is so valuable is that it gives us an easy opportunity for this pause and reflection. We are given the chance to be collected, to think, to be at *peace.* We have to remember that strife for strife's sake, discontent for discontent's sake, restlessness for restlessness' sake, can never be good. We must not run away from ourselves, or even want to run away. It is a most unfortunate thing when rest means boredom. There must be attainment in the midst of endeavour, and not merely external attainment, but what I may call internal attainment also. So far as our own selves are concerned, we must not always feel that what we want is just beyond our grasp. There must be peace

at the very heart of our struggle. It is difficult, no doubt, to obtain the right kind of peace, or to obtain it in the right way. We do not want the peace of sloth, the peace of self-satisfaction, the peace of obtuseness. But we want the peace which is higher than all these, and yet truer. It is the peace to which Wordsworth alludes in his character of the Happy Warrior. He is the man who in himself possesses his own desire, who through the heat of the conflict keeps the law in calmness made, and sees what he foresaw. Man is more, and must reckon himself more, than a bundle of activities, or the subject of desires and aims. He is himself. Life must not be a mere perpetual hunt, especially when the quarry, as in so very many cases, is never actually caught, or when the nature of the quarry is poor, useless, and ephemeral. And what is true of ourselves is true of our children. We take too readily on trust the unsifted idea that our children should have better chances than ourselves, advance in the social scale, or start on life with bigger fortunes than we did. For them, as for us, the ultimate question is not what they *have*, not even what they *do*, but what, through having and through doing, they *are*. Are *we* to pass through life restless, unsatisfied, driven, and ill at

ease that *they*, too, may do the like? Such an end is not worth such a means.

This higher peace, then, of which I speak, this true possession of our souls, is doubtless partly won by right activity, by labouring at that which is worth our labour, by seeking to obtain that which is worth obtaining. But it is not merely so won. It is not merely won by the kind and quality of our activities. And this is fortunate, because for so many persons the kind and quality of their activities are only to a limited extent within their own choice and control. Two men or two women can live externally very much the same sort of life; they can both spend the same time in working for themselves and in working for others. Yet, needless to say, they can be very different people—different in spiritual value, different in the texture of their souls, different in the measure of attainment and of peace, whereof they are conscious within them.

It may be that even in our dissatisfaction with our moral selves there should be a limit. The prayer I have already quoted speaks of a "healthy discontent." There may be a discontent even within the moral sphere which is unhealthy. It is clear that below such a false discontent lie all forms of self-righteousness, of conceit, of sloth, of moral insensibility and obtuseness. But the false discontent is

not the less real. It may show itself in timid scrupulosity, in morbid despair, in fretful anxiousness. How, then, is the mean to be obtained, and how are these false extremes to be avoided? I think there is only one true way. I think this higher peace, which at once reconciles and strengthens, which calms us and clears our vision, which gives a certain stability and fixity to our souls, which, while preventing our falling into sloth or conceit, frees us from restlessness and from the bondage of unsatisfied desire, which gives us the consciousness of attainment, the consciousness of *permanence* even amid the transitoriness of ourselves and of outward things,—I believe that this higher peace can only fitly be described as the Peace of God. God is its author, and if we earnestly seek this peace from him, it is possible that we shall obtain it, that its healing and inspiring power will be granted us.

"Most blessed is, beyond compare,
The peace of God.
A crystal stream that softly flows,
A shelter, when the storm wind blows,
A star, whose light for ever glows.
The path we trod
So wearily, grows perfect fair
When heaven's own messenger is there—
The peace of God."

This is the peace which the highest

religious teachers have spoken of: it is the peace which those who are most truly religious seem most fully and truly to enjoy. This is the peace of which we hear sometimes in the Psalter. We catch the echoes of its pleading voice. "Fret not thyself," it bids us; "commune with God, and be still." "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him." "Trust in the Lord, and do good." "In the multitude of my cares within me, thy comforts delight my soul." "I have quieted my soul, as a child that is weaned upon his mother." "Great peace have they who love thy law; there shall be no stumbling-block for them." "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee." This peace of which these psalmists speak has clearly nothing in common with self-satisfaction, with blinkered delusion, with sloth, with ignorance. It is not a peace which refuses to look out upon the horrors of the world, which persists in supposing that things are better than they are, which draws a curtain before all that is problematic and disquieting. It is not a peace which wants to heal the hurt slightly, or to cry Peace, peace, when there is no peace. It does not make those who have it less open-eyed, less brave, less strenuous, less humble. But it does this—it makes them less fretful, it makes them calmer. And it does this, if I am right, in two directions. It

causes an increase of faith, and therefore an increase of strength. We cannot, indeed, I fancy, quite say with Pippa, "God's in his Heaven: all's right with the world." How can we say this when the murders of our brethren in Russia have been a violation of right, have been a bestial exhibition of evil? If the word "right" has to bear any meaning at all, we must admit that it is *not* all right with the world, but through the peace of God we may be able to open our eyes widely and bravely, and yet not to quail, yet not to let our hearts sink; yet not to lose our faith that at the centre of the universe are not chance and not evil, but righteousness; yes, hard though it be to believe it, even love. This is one meaning of the peace of God, and this is why it has been said to pass beyond understanding. And in the second direction the peace acts upon ourselves. It makes us, not indeed *satisfied* with our sins, our failures, our weakness, our incompetence, but nevertheless it makes us not idly and vainly anxious about them. It gives us a kind of calm, of confidence, of security, which is remote from conceit and satisfaction upon the one hand, and remote from despair and fretfulness upon the other.

Irritability and fretfulness cause a great waste of strength. They may be the defects of qualities, but they are none the less defects.

"Fret not thyself" is for many of us one of the most necessary counsels in the Psalter. To some fretfulness becomes almost a kind of physical sensation. It prevents application; it disturbs digestion; it impairs sleep; it is a sort of gnawing anxiety, which the inevitable difficulties and conflicts and disappointments of life, and our own no less inevitable errors, constantly and repeatedly engender. Those of us who suffer from this fretfulness and worry must seek by calm thought, by steady determination, by earnest prayer, to rid themselves of a grave danger while yet there is time. We must seek to prevent the mischief becoming an obsession. We must literally *cast away* the burden; we must cast the burden upon God, for he *can* deliver us. "He maketh peace in his high places," and from his heavenly store there is enough for us all. The heavenly peace helps us to do our best simply and bravely, and, when we have done it, not to mind what is said about us; to be prepared for censure and for failure, to recognise our incapacities; but to leave all—what we have done and what we have failed to do alike—to the judgment and the control of God. It makes us see what is important and what is trivial; it makes us recognise the mean, the material, the coarse, the degraded; it purifies our work, and it strengthens our hearts. God

is around us and above us. We cast our burden upon him: he will sustain us. It is this Peace which, above all others, we will ask of him. It is this Peace which, even in the stress and turmoil of human life, he will and he does bestow.

XII

"Fear not the sentence of death, remember them that have been before thee, and that come after; this is the sentence from the Lord over all flesh: and why dost thou refuse, when it is the good pleasure of the Most High?"—Ecclesiasticus xli. 3, 4.

"The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God: they are in peace."—Wisdom of Solomon iii. 1, 3.

To-day in all the synagogues of London an appeal is made for our metropolitan hospitals and dispensaries. Let us who are assembled in this hall be also mindful of their enormous claims upon our purses and our sympathy. We live in a hurrying age, and the demands of the hour are insistent, but few members of this Union will, I think, forget that the sermon on Hospital Saturday last year was given by a remarkable man whose earthly life was fast drawing to a close when that sermon was delivered.[1] His address was included in the volume of addresses chosen from those given during our first session; it is well worth reading again. He had long been

[1] Mr. Alfred Louis Cohen.

connected with one of our great London hospitals, and he spoke from the fulness of knowledge. But what marked out his appeal for the hospitals, and especially for the nurses, towards whose greater efficiency and well-being he had strenuously laboured, was not so much the address itself, excellent though it was, as the peculiar circumstances under which it was delivered. Most of those who heard it were aware that the man, who spoke so powerfully on behalf of institutions whose great object is to retain for a renewed term of healthy life the suffering and the sick, was himself under sure sentence of death. We knew that he was experiencing frequent and violent pain, the symptoms and expression of a terrible malady, to which there could only be one inevitable end. There was something heroic, something truly tragic, in such a man at such a time pleading for such a cause. By no word did he indicate the personal note; the address might have been written by some one in the fulness of health and vigour. And this reserve was characteristic. Ready as he was to die, he was determined to fight his malady to the end, to live nobly as long as life endured, thinking and working for the welfare of his city and his community, so long as his failing strength permitted. We cannot honour the memory of our dear friend better than by

remembering the needs of those hospitals in which he took so intense an interest, and whose cause he pleaded in so striking and so pathetic a manner at the eleventh hour of his earthly life.

Though one aim of the hospitals is to rescue and to cure, this aim cannot always be fulfilled. The doctors and nurses who work within their walls become necessarily familiar with the approach and the visage of death. They labour for life, but the inevitable limits and chances of life are constantly before their minds and eyes. And, perhaps, in the character of their profession we may see, as in a figure, our own right attitude towards life and death. The hospitals may speak to us a lesson: they may be a kind of parable, talking to us, without words, of the deepest problems of our being.

How men have regarded death, even as how they have regarded life, is one of the most interesting chapters of human history. Sometimes it would seem to us that life has been valued too little, and sometimes that it has been valued too much; sometimes the anticipation of inevitable death has, we hold, exercised too great an influence upon life, sometimes it has hardly been realised enough. Life and death have been looked at in profoundly different ways according as men have thought that the

individual consciousness ceases at death, or that death is merely the bridge to another phase and period of existence. Yet even the dogma or the hope of a future life, in one or other of its many forms, has not made men think alike about the value of life and the significance of death, just as even without that doctrine men have varied in their estimates of both. Wise men have held that all earthly life should be a preparation for death, while one of the greatest and noblest of modern philosophers has laid it down as an axiom that the wise man thinks of nothing with less care or frequency than the coming of death.

Because earthly life is transitory, it is not therefore evil. But because death puts a term to joy, death too is not necessarily evil. God, we may believe, has put the joy of life in our hearts, and pessimism can never become, on the hypothesis that Judaism and religion are true, the prevailing attitude of mankind. If life were not valued and cared for, the hospitals, for which we are pleading to-day, would scarcely exist. To prolong life would be so admittedly undesirable that all the science and paraphernalia which hospitals imply and include could hardly have arisen. In spite of the sorrows, disappointments, and miseries of life, we feel that the good outweighs the bad, the interest

overbalances the dulness, the gladness is larger than the pain. We find many consolations in death: we recall the famous words, "those whom the gods love die young"; "he being perfected in a short time fulfilled a long time"; we realise that to many, even to those to whom death comes soon, it may be a release, a rescue, or a blessing; and we have these feelings and convictions quite apart from our belief in a future life, and whether we possess, or do not possess, the assured faith that such a second existence will include all that we now mean by personal and individual consciousness. Death is by no means a mere evil; and yet life upon the whole is sweet and good.

When those we love die young, and before the measure of their years is reached, we grieve not only for ourselves, but also, I think, for them. We do not know to what higher duties or joys they have been called away; yet we grieve that they have not lived longer, and expanded more fully amid such opportunities of work and gladness, of interest and knowledge and love, as this earthly life has to offer to those who use it well. And yet could we even contemplate without misgiving, and more than misgiving, the idea of an earthly life which was indefinitely prolonged? I will

not say that the only reason that the joys of earth are sweet is because "by laws of space and time they die," but undoubtedly the provision of their cessation lends to them an additional grace. We cannot tell what a timeless existence may mean, but that to our human life there is a term does not therefore make life incomplete. It is rather a rounded whole; it has its beginning, its growth, its ripeness, its decay, and lastly its end.

In a beautiful poem George Eliot has laid down the doctrine that the greatness of human achievement has been due to the certainty and foreknowledge of death. If endless morrows had stretched before man's vision, he would never have accomplished anything to-day. Death has been the greatest stimulus to a noble life. Whatever may be the historical truth of this conception, it seems clear that the right use to which we should and can put the knowledge that we all must die lies between paralysis of effort on the one hand and careless living upon the other. Death should be so dwelt upon as to make the thought of it a purification of life. We should be familiar enough with death, that the "king of terrors" shall in no wise seem fitly to describe it; but our normal attitude should be the desire of life, even though there must be no shrinking when the

end is nigh. Our supreme English painter—Watts—constantly sought in his noblest works to familiarise us with a high conception of death. Death to him is the nurse, the kindly mother, who comes when our allotted work is done, to put us to sleep and to rest. Human love is powerless to arrest death's coming,—his wings are bruised in the attempt—but withal there is no violence in death's onset; it is irresistible, but benign. Death crowns innocence; death touches the weary labourer, and his toil is done; all pay their court to death, who at the last delivers and redeems. But life is greater than death, and ever springs out of death anew. The great painter himself, who remained so marvellously vigorous and active in extreme old age, was true to his own ideals. He was ready, but not anxious, for the summons.

It would be a capitulation to pessimism were men to hold that, under the majority of circumstances, a long life is not desirable. And this attitude towards life and death is typified in our hospitals. By the skill and devotion which are there displayed, many a life which otherwise would be cut off prematurely is prolonged to its natural limits. And on the other hand, to those who die in the hospitals, death often comes, as we are told, in gentler and sweeter guise than could be the case without the ministration of the

wise doctor and the tender nurse. The hospitals give back many to life and strength; they also make death more gentle. On the one hand, they remind us of sickness and death; on the other, they recall to us the hopes and duties of life. And not only this. Just as we live not merely for ourselves, but also for the future, as our lives benefit or injure those who come after us and the community at large, so the hospitals exist not merely for the individuals who reap the present advantage of them, but by the knowledge and science which they acquire, extend, and transmit, they are of continuous and pressing importance for all future generations. In helping them we help those who come after us as well as ourselves. We are self-regarding and altruistic in one.

The thought of death, then, is to make us think more worthily of life, to do more worthily while we live. Death only cheapens what is in itself cheap: it cannot be said that it makes even the most evanescent joy less real at the moment of its enjoyment. Death, rightly regarded, does not make any good thing of earth less good, but it does help us to distinguish between false and true, between glitter and gold. The thought of death steadies and concentrates. It is as mistaken to live without the frequent thought that our

days are numbered as to let the uncertainty of life prevent preparation or continuous toil. We have no time to lose, but we have a good deal of time to spend. Because death will inevitably bring this time to an end, that makes no difference to the nature of its contents, though it does supply a reason to make the contents large and good.

In the remarkable introduction to the *Crown of Wild Olive*, Ruskin asserts that he had to face the difficulty of not knowing whether to address the audience to which he lectured as believing or not believing in any other world than this. He charges average humanity with "a belief in *im*mortality so far as to avoid preparation for death, and in mortality so far as to avoid preparation for anything after death." In either case, if I understand him rightly, the charge is the same. The solemn future—be it death or life beyond death—does not adequately affect our present life, and sufficiently determine the quality of our deeds and thoughts. But curiously enough the right effect of both death and immortality is conceived to be identical. Ruskin insists that what he calls a "brave belief in death" is inconsistent with neither "purity of character nor energy of hand." "The shortness of life," he says, "is not to any rational person a conclusive reason for wasting the space of

it which may be granted him; nor does the anticipation of death, to-morrow, suggest, to any one but a drunkard, the expediency of drunkenness to-day." Ruskin indeed pours out some words of burning sarcasm against those who profess a brave belief in eternal life, but show anything but satisfaction in the advent of death.

Nevertheless, the belief in any kind of immortality has been of enormous influence in the view men have taken of earthly existence, and it would be rash to assert that that influence has not upon the whole acted in the direction of good. What suffering has been patiently endured, what martyrdoms have been nobly undergone, with and through the belief that this life was not the end. It is very doubtful whether the tender care of the sick and the dying would have grown to its present developments, had it not been for the impassioned conviction that those who received it were other in make and destiny than the beasts that perish. The hospital in its specially English conception as the sanctuary of the suffering poor—and not merely as the necessary practising school for the advancement of medical knowledge — probably depends to a large degree for its continuance upon a succession of men and women who are believers in immortality and God. Let such believers then be the foremost to sup-

port the hospitals. Life as the mysterious gift of God; still more, life as a divine gift which death itself is not to end, claims not illogically the holiest and tenderest care. It might be thought that if this life be regarded as the absolute end, it would be all the more valued. But it is probable that this is not the case. On the contrary. Life in all its stages becomes the holier and more precious if death is not supposed utterly to arrest its development. Quite apart from its explanation of the problem of evil, the doctrine of immortality seems to cast a radiance behind as well as a radiance before. Ruskin speaks with bitter irony of those who lead careless lives on earth because they expect endless existence beyond it. Looking away from these, he appeals to them in whose belief "all the peace and power and joy they can ever win, must be won now, and all fruit of victory gathered here, or never," and he asks them (with that haunting remembrance of Biblical phrases which adds so great a charm to his inimitable prose) whether they will "still, throughout the puny totality of their lives, weary themselves in the fire for vanity"? But surely the real effect of a living belief in an Hereafter must be to make this earthly life itself less vain. If we compare the teaching of the Wisdom of Solomon with that of the Son of Sirach, we shall find not only a loftier estimate of death,

but also a more ideal estimate of life. The advance is due to the doctrine of immortality. To prepare for death is to prepare for life; and the life which may be revealed behind the veil can only be conceived as still subjected to the law of truth, of goodness, and of love.

We want to be as well equipped as possible in the hour of death. And the only conceivable equipment which can avail us is knowledge and righteousness and love. Yet though the vision of the future adds a glory to the best things of earth, makes sin more sinful and false pleasures more false, it need not either make the peculiar joys of our existence here less desirable, or invalidate the wish for a long and a full life before those we love or ourselves pass through the gates of death into the hands of God. Just as each stage of our mortal life has its special joys, which are not the less joyous because they are transitory, and not the less real because there are other joys and excellences which are greater than they, so the whole of earthly life is not the less real, and its treasures and pleasures are not the less justifiable or God-given, because they come and go, arise and disappear. The joy which does not conflict with the law of righteousness and purity, though evanescent, is not unreal.

Nor, again, need we suppose that an

earth on which there was less pain and sickness, less suffering and disease, an earth on which there were fewer lives cut off in their prime or before it, would be an earth which thought and cared less for the higher goods of the spirit and was less worthy of immortality. It is true that these forms of evil, as we call them, are often transfigured into good, becoming the opportunity for the fine display of human heroism and greatness. The hospitals, for which preachers are pleading to-day and to-morrow, are schools of virtue and seed-plots of devotion and of love. But we may well believe that there will always be fields in one form or another for the display and development of virtue. We need not be afraid to help in the alleviation of evil because evil is necessary for the attainment of the highest good. These doubtful paradoxes need not trouble us. And in the same way we may rightly seek to live, in order to be the more ready to die. We may, and we should, help our hospitals to prolong life and lessen pain, even though we do not murmur at "the sentence from the Lord over all flesh," even though we believe that "the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God," and that "eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, beside thee, O God, what thou preparest for them that wait for thee."

XIII

"This world is like a vestibule before the world to come; prepare thyself in the vestibule, that thou mayest enter into the hall."

"Better is one hour of repentance and good deeds in this world than the whole life of the world to come; but better is one hour of blissfulness of spirit in the world to come than the whole life of this world."

THE text for this sermon is taken from two famous sayings in the so-called "Ethics of the Fathers." They will be found on page 197 of the Authorised Daily Prayer-Book. They run as follows:—

"R. Jacob said: This world is like a vestibule before the world to come; prepare thyself in the vestibule, that thou mayest enter into the hall. He used to say: Better is one hour of repentance and good deeds in this world than the whole life of the world to come; but better is one hour of blissfulness of spirit in the world to come than the whole life of this world."

If we believe in any kind of life after death, whether this future life be accom-

panied by continuation of our individual earthly personality or not, what effect should this belief produce upon our conception of the present life and upon our conduct during its course? No one can rightly say that this question is unnecessary. At some season or other of our lives it forces itself upon the attention of most of us, though too frequently it is put aside as insoluble or theoretic. There can be, I think, little doubt that the right answer to this fundamental religious question lies somewhere between two extremes, of which the one depreciates the importance or the excellence of the present in contrast with the Future, while the other too greatly neglects the future in the supposed interests of the Present. I will not claim that the right answer is characteristic only of our own religion, though I do think that it is in full accordance with the doctrine of Judaism to do full justice both to this world and to the next. The strange paradox of the second portion of our text may be taken to prefigure an answer which neglects the claims of neither the visible nor the invisible world. But not even Judaism has always seen, or always sees, rightly in this solemn and tremendous subject. Or perhaps it would be more accurate, and also more modest to say, that not all Jewish teachers, in the opinion of the present speaker, have seen or see rightly,

have spoken or speak wisely, about this fascinating and ever-recurring problem.

It might have been better for Judaism if it had not paid so much attention to what was said and thought upon the subject by Christianity. For it is the natural tendency of the teachers of one religion to caricature or exaggerate the doctrines of another. They fasten upon the faults of the rival creed rather than upon its virtues; they seek for or notice one-sided expressions of its teaching—and these they hold up as the characteristic essence of its faith. And the result of this natural tendency is to produce another and opposite exaggeration in the exposition and doctrine of their own religion. Its natural development is impeded by an artificial contrast or opposition to the supposed doctrines of another creed. As an illustration of this tendency, so far as it has affected Judaism, I may mention—before considering the effects of the tendency in the particular subject of to-day—the supposed Christian doctrine of Justification by Faith. Jewish theologians have set forth this doctrine in its crudest and most exaggerated form, and in this form it has been regarded as an essential feature of Christianity. And, as a result, the opposite doctrine of Justification by Works has been unduly and one-sidedly emphasised as the characteristic doctrine of Judaism, so that the place

and importance of Faith are often less properly valued by a modern Jewish theologian than by the old Rabbinic doctors.

Something of the same sort has sometimes happened, and still happens, as regards the Jewish attitude towards the future life and its influence upon the life on earth. There is a certain temper of mind, or again, there is a certain exaggerated doctrine, which is commonly known as "other-worldliness." The word does not necessarily indicate a fault; it is not always or necessarily used with a contemptuous or depreciatory signification, but it is often so used, and it is in this exaggerated or faulty sense that I refer to it here. Our superb new English dictionary defines "other-worldliness" in this sense as "the disposition to consider the future state and neglect the affairs of the present; a spirit of worldliness as applied to the future life; morbid, ascetic, or selfish spirituality." The creation of the word is apparently due to the poet Coleridge. In the *Reminiscences of Conversations with Coleridge*, which were published by Allsopp in 1836, this passage occurs: "I once asked Tom Clarkson whether he ever thought of his probable fate in the next world; to which he replied, 'How can I? I think only of the slaves in the Barbadoes.'" And then Coleridge adds: "Does Mr. Wilberforce care a farthing for the slaves

in the West Indies, or if they were all at the devil, so that *his soul were saved*? As there is a worldliness, or the *too-much* of this life, so there is *another-worldliness*, or rather *other-worldliness*, equally hateful and selfish with *this* worldliness."

Coleridge was grossly unjust to Wilberforce. It is a notable fact — deserving of the most careful consideration — that men who have cared and thought most intensely about the salvation of their own souls have also been passionate social reformers, most eager to redress wrongs, to redeem the fallen, to lessen the sum of human misery. At the same time there does exist a certain phase of spiritual selfishness, such as Coleridge describes.

Jewish writers have been, I think, somewhat wont to regard other-worldliness, in this odious or selfish sense, as the creation and characteristic of Christianity. They have, therefore, sometimes been too inclined to emphasise its opposite, and to regard this opposite doctrine, also in a more or less exaggerated form, as the characteristic teaching of Judaism.

Let me put before you a phase and expression of other-worldliness taken from the writings of one whom the late Professor Jowett described as "a mighty genius subjected to or inspired by a strong religious

influence"; as one in whom "the finest mathematical genius was united with the most exquisite moral sensibility"; "the greatest of all controversialists, a philosopher saint, an enthusiast for poverty and the poor." "No man," says Professor Jowett, "ever freed himself so completely from the conventionalities of religion. No man ever combined such strong and simple faith with such a profound knowledge of human nature. In no one were such intellectual gifts united with such moral graces."

Well, this man, whom some of those here present may have guessed to be Pascal, has written in his famous *Pensées* passages about immortality and our earthly life with which, I believe, all here will be in more or less strong disagreement. Yet we must remember that they are not conventionalities, but intense convictions, uttered by the lips of genius. It can only do us good from time to time to read and hear such thoughts, so admirably expressed, even though, or just because, we disagree with them. We shall do well to ask ourselves, in spite of their taint of exaggeration, in spite of the immediate disbelief and opposition which at once jump into our minds, "What is their measure of truth? what is their justification?" With this proviso and caution, let us listen for a few minutes to the words of Pascal:

"The immortality of the soul is a matter which is of so great consequence to us, and which touches us so profoundly, that we must have lost all feeling if we are careless of the truth about it. Our every action and our every thought must take such different roads, according as there are, or are not, eternal blessings for which to hope, that it is impossible to take a single step with sense or judgment, unless we regulate it by the point of view of what should be our ultimate and final aim.

"We do not require great elevation of mind to understand that here on earth there is no true and solid satisfaction, that all our pleasures are but vanity, that our evils are infinite. . . . It is indisputable that there is no good in this world save in the hope of another, and that as there are no more woes for those who have an entire assurance of eternity, so there is no happiness for those who have not a ray of its light."

Let me put in contrast with these words of Pascal a quotation from another great genius, who had gradually lost faith in the doctrines of Christianity. "Which of us," says this great teacher and genius, "has the impiety not to feel that our souls are only too narrow for the joy of looking into the trusting eyes of our children, of reposing on the love of a husband or a wife—nay, of listening to

the divine voice of music or watching the calm brightness of autumnal afternoons?" "Why should I give my neighbour short weight in this world because there is not another world in which I shall have something to weigh out to him? It is conceivable that in some minds the deep pathos lying in the thought of human mortality—that we are here for a little while and then vanish away, that this earthly life is all that is given to our loved ones and to our many suffering fellow-men—lies nearer the fountains of moral emotion than the conception of extended existence."

Between these extreme opinions there are many justifiable points of view, which may appeal to different orders of mind. Noble lives can be lived, and are lived, by men and women who have the widest possible varieties of belief and non-belief on the subject of the future life. But this fact does not make the question unimportant even from a purely ethical point of view. It does not follow that the wide prevalence of disbelief in immortality would not have the most serious ethical effect, and, above all, it does not follow, because different opinions may produce a noble life, that therefore *no* opinion, putting the question aside in sheer neglect and indifference, will produce the same satisfactory and ethically valuable result.

In the short time still available in this sermon I propose to assume that all those whom I am now addressing share the belief in some form of immortality, whether that immortality or future life be, or be not, combined with the retention of individual consciousness and the memory of the earthly life. The question then resolves itself into this: What effect should this belief have upon our conception of our present human existence and of our actions during its span?

It is an error to suppose that other-worldliness necessarily involves sourness and gloom. There are those the manner of whose life on earth is largely fashioned by their belief in another, who are yet cheerful and happy, capable of laughter, and ready to enjoy. And on the other hand, those who are somewhat inclined to condemn other-worldliness will readily admit that "this-worldliness" is at least equally, if not much more, open to condemnation and ridicule.

The belief in some form of immortality seems to have three main ethical effects. These effects run into each other, and can only be distinguished and held apart by an abstraction, but such an abstraction may be temporarily useful for the sake of clearness and of argument. In the first place, then, the belief is regulative and purifying. We have seen that it is possible to hold that,

if man's soul neither lives nor is used again after death, nevertheless there can and should be an idealism in earthly life, and there can and should be a criterion by which to distinguish false pleasure from true pleasure, bad aims from good. But how much securer is that idealism, how much more cogent the criterion, upon the basis of the doctrine of Immortality. This doctrine does not, rightly regarded, destroy the pleasures of sense; it does not say that because earthly joys are fleeting, therefore they are vain; but it does cheapen, and rightly cheapen, those pleasures which are not transfigured by idealism. The joys which the great teacher enumerated are joys of the soul at least as much as, and indeed more than, they are joys of the body. The coarser pleasures of sense, even the coarser pleasures of the understanding, the lower aims of the sensualist and the materialist, and even all the lower ambitions, the lower longings and successes, these are all cheapened, and rightly cheapened, by the thought of Immortality. If a man were to argue that because he cannot carry his riches to the grave, that is no reason why he should not seek them and enjoy them while he lives, there is no ultimate reply to him upon a purely ethical basis: it becomes a question of judgment and of taste. But if a man believes that his soul is not extinguished by death,

will he, and should he, not realise that, not perhaps the only thing, but certainly the thing of greatest moment for himself, and possibly for others, is how best he can develop his soul before his hour of departure comes? He may not fear punishment; he may not look for reward; but for far higher and more essential reasons, he will rightly seek so to live that, in the sublime words of Plato, he may be of good cheer about his soul, and he will surely realise that to be of good cheer he must "array the soul, not in some foreign attire, but in her own proper jewels, temperance and justice and courage and nobility and truth," for only "adorned with these is she ready to go on her journey when her hour comes." And remembering the "infinite possibilities of another life," he will hold that the Rabbi was only uttering wise and sober counsel when he said: "Prepare thyself in the vestibule, that thou mayest enter into the hall."

But we must go one step farther. The opposition between sense and soul, spirit and matter, has entered deeply into almost all the great religions and idealistic philosophies of the world. It has entered, though I have no time to prove this statement here, into our own. Though we reject the notion, which is itself to a large extent a caricature, that this world is a vale of tears, we must feel that in the deeper

doctrine of Pascal there is an element of truth. It is a truth hard to catch, to hold, or to define, but can we venture to maintain that it is wholly unreal? When all has been said on the side of earth that can be said, does there not always remain over a touch of bitter, of unsatisfyingness, even in its most entrancing joys? Why is this? Is it merely that they are fleeting? Or is not that, though we may draw nearer and nearer to the Kingdom of God upon earth, that Kingdom upon earth can never be fully attained? For some reason or other, the will of God seems to be that, upon this world, there must ever rest a touch of imperfection and of inadequacy: it is only the vestibule, and the vestibule can never be the hall. In mythical but exalted language Plato seems to have been conscious of this truth when he said: "Evils can never pass away; for there must always remain something which is antagonistic to good. Having no place among the gods in heaven, of necessity they hover around the mortal nature, and this earthly sphere." And because this touch of imperfection seems abiding in this world—the world of preparation—may not the old Rabbi have been right when he said: "Better is one hour of blissfulness of spirit in the world to come than the whole life of this world"?

The vestibule can never be the hall. And to estimate the vestibule aright, we must re-

member the hall. Without sufficient thought for the hall, we shall not live rightly in the vestibule. We may paraphrase the conception in any way we choose. We may say that this is a world of conflict and of struggle, a world of progress and aspiration. We may also freely and gladly admit that no limits can be set to the upward development of man; we may joyfully believe in his slow but constant ascent to higher and higher stages of knowledge and of morality. And yet, so far as we can fathom—for all practical purposes of faith—the vestibule will remain the vestibule, and its fuller meaning and justification will remain rooted in the fact that it is a part and not the whole, the prelude and not the complete story.

Nevertheless, the old Rabbi also said: "Better is one hour of repentance and good deeds in this world than the whole life of the world to come." May we not take this to indicate that while some other-worldliness is necessary for the right comprehension of and right conduct in this world, the *merits* of this world must also not be overlooked? The joys of childhood pass away: but who will say that they are not real, and that they should not be grasped? The joys of this world pass away: in their very evanescence there is a touch of bitter-sweet; but because they are temporary, they are not the less real. The

thought of the hall is not to degrade the vestibule, or to make it joyless: on the contrary, it will give the vestibule strength and dignity; it will regulate and purify; it will only cheapen whatever is coarse or common or degraded. The vestibule has its own joys, and these are legitimate; it has even its own glories. Repentance, self-conquest, self-sacrifice—whether these may find a place in the hall we cannot say, but we are convinced that they constitute the glory of the vestibule. The thought of the hereafter only deepens their validity and their worth. And, above all, the highest glory of this world is the possibility of such a life with God, of such spiritual experiences, as seem to many the best proof of the hereafter. Other-worldliness in the wrong sense degrades this world, because it forgets that here too we may care for righteousness and truth, that here too we may love and worship God.

I have only left myself a brief moment for the two other ethical effects of the conception of a future life, but I cannot omit them altogether. If that conception purifies and regulates, it also encourages and stimulates. No longer does it produce this effect through the fear of punishment or the hope of reward. But it encourages us because we feel that if this life be not all, if the soul be not utterly ended at death, there is a greater meaning in life, and

therefore a greater stimulus to do our best for righteousness and for truth. Life is invested with a profounder significance. Moreover, if our soul is, as it were, used again, whether, as so many Eastern races think, in other lives upon earth, or in a further existence of our own, the responsibility of existence is deepened. As we fashion our souls, so will their future be determined. "Our deeds still travel with us from afar, and what we have been makes us what we are." And not only what we are, but also what we shall be. We have an immortal soul in our keeping. That thought should wring *out* of us the best that is *in* us. In the hour of death we should like our souls to be as pure and as developed as possible for that which, in God's ineffable wisdom, may lie before them.

And, lastly, the thought of immortality consoles. Hardly will it lose—pray God that it may not lose—this power among humanity. Oh, the infinite sorrows of the world! Oh, the rivers of human tears; the aching hearts; the wracked and tortured bodies; the wracked and tortured souls; the shame, the desolation, and the sin! Oh, the void wrought by death, and the griefs that are far worse than death! Oh, the pity of it all, the waste of it, the horror and the agony! Why must these things be? What is their meaning? Is Love or Chance the ruler

of the world? And as we meditate on these things, and face them bravely, and as, one by one, we recall to ourselves in their drear and endless sequence, the horrors and miseries of the world and of humanity, the old words come back, the old sweet words: "He healeth the broken-hearted; he bindeth up their wounds." When and where shall this healing come? Partly on earth, for the spiritual life of man gives a foretaste and pledge of something beyond earth. Eternal life may be realised here; communion with God consoles even now. But they point to a fuller consummation hereafter. The whispered hope is ever renewed. The fuller healing shall come, for God is good, beyond the grave. "They who walk in darkness shall see a great light: they who dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them shall the light shine." "He will wipe away tears from off all faces; he will swallow up death for ever." Amen.

XIV

THE text for this sermon is taken from a small Rabbinical treatise on the Acquisition of the Torah, commonly appended to the Sayings of the Fathers. It is printed in Mr. Singer's edition of the orthodox Prayer-Book on pages 204 to 209. The particular passage to which I refer occurs at the bottom of page 205, and runs as follows :—

"This is the way that is becoming for the study of the Torah : a morsel of bread with salt thou must eat, and water by measure thou must drink ; thou must sleep upon the ground, and lead a life of trouble the while thou toilest in the Torah. If thou doest thus, 'Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee' (Psalm cxxviii. 2) ; happy shalt thou be in this world, and it shall be well with thee in the world to come."

To understand and appreciate the meaning of this passage one must remember that, for the writer the study of the Torah meant the highest life, the noblest activity to which man can attain. To reach this highest life, to

practise this noblest activity, the necessary means are these: "A morsel of bread with salt thou must eat, and water by measure thou must drink; thou must sleep upon the ground, and lead a life of trouble." In plain words, an ascetic manner of living is necessary for the acquisition of the highest and noblest life. Is this an isolated statement? an exceptional injunction? or does Judaism sanction and even demand a form of asceticism?

We are accustomed to hear a very different doctrine. Judaism, we are usually told, does not favour asceticism. It thoroughly objects to the mortification of the flesh. That is comfortable teaching for all of us to whom the well-being of the flesh is an important element in our lives. Nothing is nicer than giving comfort and pleasure a religious sanction and a moral halo. Jews have often spoken of asceticism as a Christian error, depending upon a false view of earthly life, a false view of the human body, a false view of God and of his relations to man.

I will not venture to assert offhand that this Jewish attitude towards asceticism is wholly wrong. But it is liable to serious exaggeration, and it is exposed to peculiar dangers.

Before going further, let us remember the great part which asceticism has played

in the history of the world. It has produced great deeds and noble lives. It has formed an important element in the teaching of many great religions and of many apostles and saints. If only as a protest against an opposite exaggeration or a particular neglect, it has accomplished results of high value in the story of civilisation. If there had never been any ascetics, if there had never been any asceticism, even using the word in its narrower and, as we shall see, in its illegitimately narrower sense, the world's literature and achievements, its record of noble thoughts and noble deeds, would be poorer than they are. Even with all allowance for evil, exaggeration, and folly, no view of life which has cherished noble souls and begotten lofty deeds can be wholly false or wholly evil. It must possess its measure of truth, though also, very possibly, its liberal measure of error and perversion. It is for us, not merely to smile in lofty superiority at these errors and perversions, but to look for the truth which they include, even though sometimes they hide it. It is the truth of asceticism which it behoves us to look for and to profit by. It is easy enough to realise its follies and its falsehoods.

We shall probably end by holding, as is only right and proper, that Judaism on this subject teaches a just mean, that it demands

of us strenuousness and self-discipline and self-denial, though not asceticism in the ordinary sense of the word. But the very truthfulness and sobriety of a mean expose it, or us who profess it, to special peril. It is the one-sided people who have, on the whole, done most in the world, and from whom the heroes have come. It is they who have dared most greatly and suffered most keenly. One-sided doctrine braces and fortifies and impels. The just mean tends to rest and equilibrium. Truth is many-sided and equable; but those who saw most aspects of truth have not usually been they who were the keenest to diffuse truth and to die for it. If we boast that Judaism is a sane and true religion, satisfying and corresponding to every side of human nature and life,—a temperate and wise religion, avoiding extremes, exaggerations, and perversions—let us remember, too, that the just mean should not spell slackness or smallness, but that it should teach self-denial, strenuousness, self-discipline, just like the extremes, only that it will teach them in a still harder form, less easy to discern, to practise, and to achieve. If Judaism teaches a mean, its moral and religious ideal is all the harder to attain.

No one aspect or view of life possesses complete truth, or shall we rather say that to the final and all-embracing truth many

interpretations and philosophies of life tend to converge? To the fulness of truth they bring their contribution and their store. Let me place before you two views of life, which we will call for the sake of clearness, Epicureanism and Stoicism respectively. We will call them so, not because they will be accurate representations either of historical Epicureanism or of historical Stoicism, but because these two great names will sufficiently indicate to you what I want to put forward. And let us at first — like the historical philosophies for the most part — neglect any possible life or development which may be in store for man beyond the grave.

We may conceive an enlightened Epicureanism telling us that the end of life is happiness. God meant us to be happy and not miserable, and we rightly seek to make the lives of our children what God would have us be ourselves. Earth is no vale of tears. Life's opportunities are glorious. We are destined to enjoy and make the most of them. Pain is no end in itself. It is right to avoid it where we can. The highest happiness involves and includes morality. But it means the harmonious exercise of all our faculties. The highest life is the *Imitatio Dei*, the imitation of God; but God suffers no pain; he does not struggle or endure;

he accomplishes, he achieves. His life may be regarded as eternal activity or as eternal repose : the two blend into one. The nature of God is the most perfect harmony as well as the most perfect unity. Let man become as like him as, within human limits, he may.

It is no unattractive ideal which is thus set before us, and which we can indefinitely expand for ourselves. It is surely not either wholly false or wholly worthless ; yet we feel that it is inadequate. Man is not God, and history and experience teach us that man can only become like God by pain and struggle and labour, by sorrow, sacrifice, and denial.

Thus, we may conceive an enlightened Stoicism telling us that the end of life is not happiness but virtue. It will remind us of the old adage, and it will accept it, "Hard is the good." It declares that, whatever the final explanation may be, life is a conflict and a struggle, and that every individual reflects within himself the characteristics of the whole. For goodness is spiritual, and the flesh and the spirit are at war. The body is not the mere servant of the soul, but too often its rebel and its enemy. The mind and the soul can triumph over the material body, but they can only do so by repression, by conquest, by despising the allurements of sense, by quelling the solicitations of desire. "A morsel of

bread with salt thou must eat, and water by measure thou must drink; thou must sleep upon the ground, and live a life of trouble the while thou toilest in the Torah."

This voice rings truer than the former, but it too is hardly adequate for us. The simple joys of life are sweet, and no philosophy will satisfy us which does not include them. Were we given bodies merely as an exercise in self-repression? Does not every faculty and exercise of the mind depend upon minute and delicate physical operations? How can that be evil without which, at least on earth, the mind itself cannot work and exist? The divine life is the happy life, and pain can only by paradox be accounted a phase of happiness. Mere negation is no virtue; mere mortification is no achievement. The higher doctrine is the sublimation of the joys of sense by transfusing them with spirituality. The body must not be weakened or mortified by asceticism, but trained and used to higher ends. The pleasures of the body become the substratum and condition for the glories of art, of literature, and of love.

And now suppose we bring death upon the scene, and even venture, in faith, to draw up the curtain behind death, and to see a truer and fuller life beyond. Will those two voices still speak to us the same words and in the same accents?

From the certainty and universality of death Epicurean and Stoic draw different conclusions. The first says: "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may." In a higher strain it urges that the sweet joys of life—the joys of friendship and of art, the joys of sight and of sound, the joys of health and exercise—are all the more precious, the more foolishly neglected, because they pass and slip from our grasp and our ken, never to return.

> "All beauteous things for which we live,
> By laws of space and time decay;
> But, oh, the very reason why
> I clasp them is because they die."

If *carpe diem* is the defiant answer of the one philosophy to the sure summons of the night, *memento mori* is the answer of the other. If the individual dies, the race goes on; and if the material crumbles and passes away, the spiritual abides and endures. Righteousness and the Source of righteousness are eternal, and therefore the only things that really matter, the only things of real value, the only real existences, are the creations of spirit—the products of the mind and of the soul. Despise then the false goods and delights of sense; pursue only the joys of the spirit. Contemn the world; seek the Torah.

It was possible to argue thus when men

believed that their individual consciousness was closed by death. How much more possible and logical for them to argue thus when they believe that the human soul is immortal. But I am sometimes inclined to think that Ruskin was right when he complained that so many people would never face the problem of death fairly and squarely. If you discuss and argue with them on the basis that death is really the end, they call you a freethinker and an objectionable person; if, on the other hand, you assume that there is to be a real continuity of personal existence after death, and from this hypothesis discuss the value of earthly life, they call you a killjoy and a theorist. They want to profess as much faith as is respectable, and yet not more than is enough to save them trouble or not to show up their inconsistencies. Even the vale of tears theory is better and more logical than a mere ignoring of life's solemnities and meaning. For, after all, seventy and eighty years of tears and struggle would be a profitable exchange for an eternity of achievement and of joy. And at any rate it might seem that the belief in immortality gave an enormous advantage to the Stoic theory that only that is of value upon earth which we can conceive as continuing in "heaven." The fleeting pleasures of sense can be granted no resurrection; surely then we should so discipline

the body that the soul may start its second stage of life as developed and as pure as possible:

"What is he but a brute,
Whose flesh has soul to suit,
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play?
To man propose this test—
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?"

Nevertheless, the higher Epicureanism has still the power and the right to make itself heard. For may it not be said that each stage of life is, in a sense, an end in itself, although it may be also a preparation for another? Childhood is not merely the preparation for manhood; nor will that child's life be most wisely and profitably spent if those who mould and direct it think always of the future and never of the present. So too of the life on earth and the life hereafter. The earthly life is an end in itself, and it must not merely be viewed as the preparation for another. Man is made of a marvellous interfusion of body and spirit. Neither need be developed at the expense of the other. Why should we assume a violent antagonism between this life and the next, if a next there be? An orderly progress and development are equally consonant with reason. Because there is another existence, pain and self-mortification become no more ends in them-

selves than if death be the real, and not merely the apparent, close of life. They are negative and unsatisfying on either hypothesis. The true advice for man remains as before: "Be positive; realise your powers; develop every side of your nature harmoniously: so shall you make of your human the nearest approach to the divine."

> "Let us not always say,
> 'Spite of this flesh to-day
> I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!'
> As the bird wings and sings,
> Let us cry, 'All good things
> Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!'"

Have we lost the thread, and become involved in a maze of opposing thoughts and contradictions? Even that is better than not thinking at all; and perhaps I might here leave the subject for each to work out for himself. And if I shall venture next week to continue, and to suggest some tentative conclusions, these will, I trust, only serve those who hear me to advance upon their own lines to more definite ends.

Before, however, any conclusions can be drawn, it is necessary that we should adopt a certain point of view towards the eternal problem of evil. The solution of the problem is beyond us, and so remains, but we must go at least so far as to say that

whatever the solution may be, evil, whether physical or moral, possesses for us certain meanings, and denotes certain values. I would say, then, that sorrow and pain are and have been, and to all seeming will still be, such huge factors in life as to make it inconceivable to believe that pleasure, enjoyment, and happiness can be the one true end of man. From the monotheistic standpoint, assuming the real existence of a good and just God, man must be meant to suffer and to struggle, for his own ultimate advantage. Again, upon all the pageant of life sin casts its dark shadow. Sin is about us, and near us; it couches at the door. It cannot and must not be ignored. Life is not mere sunshine; it cannot be meant to be mere sunshine, otherwise pain and sorrow and sin would never have been allowed to be. This is the first deduction which the facts of life compel us to draw. And the second is, that through pain and sorrow, and even through the conflict with and the triumph over sin, man has wrought his development and realised his greatness. Suffering is teaching, as the old Greeks said; the conscious voluntary sacrifice for the sake of others is the highest life: "Whom the Lord loves, he chastens: he gives pain to the son in whom he delights."

This afternoon we must leave the problem

at this point. Next Saturday we will resume the discussion and draw what conclusions we may. Meanwhile I hope I have shown or suggested that asceticism is not to be lightly dismissed as a mere hallucination or error. It will not do to say that Judaism is against asceticism, and therefore asceticism must be false. For, in the first place, it is by no means sure that Judaism *is* against it; and, in the second place, it is by no means sure that *truth* is against it. We must find out what asceticism really is, and if there be more than one kind of it, before we condemn it as outworn folly. What we do seem to see already is that it is neither the whole truth nor yet completely false. At present, then, we leave the matter in some suspense; yet clearly the reflections we have made show us that the words of the old Rabbi are not lightly to be condemned. No view of life can be satisfactory which does not take account of its shadows as well as of its light. There must be a drop of bitter in the sweetness, a bracing touch in the summer air. No high achievement can be brought to pass without a struggle, nor are self-denial and self-mastery synonymous with happiness and ease. That life is incomplete in which sorrow has never entered, in which the hand has not sometimes been held out deliberately to receive suffering and pain.

And yet it may be that in the eager pursuit

of the highest ends, in the dedication of our lives to the true service of God, the antagonism between flesh and spirit, and even, to some extent, the opposition between pleasure and pain, fall away and disappear. For the one part of the old Rabbi's description of the ideal life must not be divorced from the other. "This is the way that is becoming for the study of the Torah: a morsel of bread with salt thou must eat, and water by measure thou must drink; thou must sleep upon the ground, and live a life of trouble the while thou toilest in the Torah." But, with whatever seeming inconsistency, the Teacher continues: "If thou doest thus, Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee; happy shalt thou be in this world, and it shall be well with thee in the world to come."

XV

LAST week I attempted to place before you some reflections on the subject of asceticism. No general and definite conclusion was reached, but the drift of the argument tended to show that while there was much asceticism which could justly be called false and hurtful, there was also another kind which must enter into the very essence of the noblest life. We saw that the stern facts of human existence demanded an element of sternness in each individual's life, that history and experience proclaimed with no uncertain voice the high educational value of sorrow, suffering, and pain. While his words do not contain the whole truth—and what words can?—we felt that some truth there undoubtedly was in the old Rabbi's bidding, which was chosen as the text: "This is the way that is becoming for the study of the Torah: a morsel of bread with salt thou must eat, and water by measure thou must drink; thou must sleep upon the ground, and live a life of trouble the while thou toilest in the Torah."

I pointed out in my previous sermon that the word asceticism has an unpleasing or foolish sound to many Jewish ears. It is often said that only evanescent and heretical Jewish sects showed any tendency to the ascetic life. For the most part, asceticism in the West is regarded as the exclusive possession of Christianity, and its falsity is all the more certain because it rests upon and is the product of error.

But let us be careful how we become the slaves of words. It is doubtless pleasant to think that Judaism condemns inconvenient and troublesome privations, and that therefore it may be safely held to countenance and recommend good living, comfort, and ease. Yet when we look a little closer at this word asceticism, we observe that it only means training, practice, exercise, and discipline. Though the etymology of a word is no certain guide to its present meaning, in this case it is surely not illegitimate to contend that we may rightly use asceticism to denote not merely the severe mortification of the body, but also, and more correctly, that bracing discipline of body, mind, and will which makes each of them better fitted to do its own special work. Nor can there be any historic likelihood that Judaism teaches a soft morality, an easy-going religion. It would not be difficult to show

that Judaism has always agreed with the Greek motto, "Hard is the good." As becomes a religion which has had more voluntary martyrs than perhaps any other creed, it has never denied, indeed it has always urged, that the lesser good must be sacrificed for the sake of the greater good, and that even life itself must be readily given up for the sake of Truth and Fidelity.

Those of you who were present in this hall last Sabbath may remember that I put forward certain contrasted ideals of life under the names of Epicureanism and Stoicism respectively. Now in a way admittedly one-sided, and yet not wholly without success or foundation, Rabbinic Judaism did enunciate and fashion an ideal which, to some extent and within certain limits, combined the two ideals spoken of on the previous occasion. And the great question which those of us who cannot accept the full Rabbinic ideal, with all its necessary implications, have to ask ourselves is: With what new ideal, and with what fresh stimulants for action, are we going to replace the old? I say the full Rabbinic ideal with all its necessary implications, for the modern conservative, and pseudo-conservative, adaptations of that ideal lack reality and conviction.

What, in a few brief words, was the Rabbinic ideal? The basis and condition

of the whole conception were the belief and conviction that the Law of the Pentateuch was perfect, immutable, and divine. Every single command, nay, every word of that book, was the unqualified product of God. This, then, was the basis: the ideal itself was, first, the fulfilment of all the ordinances of that perfect Law and of all the further injunctions which those ordinances could be supposed to imply and include; secondly, the study of that Law and of all its developments. Now, of this ideal, as it once existed, and as in the minds and lives of some simple believers it still exists, two things must be said. The fulfilment and study of the Law were, on the one hand, a discipline; they demanded self-denial, abstinence, the voluntary acceptance of hardships, and even suffering. On the other hand, there was no joy equal to their joy, there was no happiness equal to their happiness, there was no self-realisation and self-development equal to those which they could yield. Thus the Law provided both asceticism and delight. It included in one and the same theory and practice of life the contrasted ideals of the Stoic and the Epicurean. For, to a very considerable extent, the theory was realised in practice. The self-same people accepted a hard discipline and enjoyed a big joy. We cannot any longer accept this theory, and

consequently we cannot essay the practice. Not only is its basis impossible of belief, but our modern environment is too manifold, our horizon is too wide and broad, to permit us to curb and coop up our lives within such narrow bonds and limits. Yet in other ways we too must seek to work out for ourselves a similar ideal. For us, too, self-discipline and self-realisation must go hand in hand.

It is not improbable that the solution of much of the difficulty, which has so far presented itself to us, may lie in the old psychological law which was, I believe, first enunciated by Aristotle in his *Ethics*. This law, or rather this observed fact, is that every free activity is followed under normal conditions by its own feeling of pleasure. The freer, the more desired the activity, the keener usually is the pleasure. Thus, under certain circumstances, there may be valid reason for the paradox that the deliberate choice and execution of a painful deed may nevertheless be accompanied by a peculiar joy. Pain and pleasure are not really so far and so rigidly separated as might at first sight be supposed. They tend sometimes to merge into each other.

Moving forward from these premises, we may perhaps say that an anti-ascetic teaching seems right and Jewish to the following extent. First, pain as such is never an end in itself. It is a means to an end beyond it.

The real error of ascetism lies largely here. To seek pain, or voluntarily to endure privation, is of no value unless it be done for a positive end outside of, and quite different from, the pain and privation themselves. Nor can we suppose that our suffering is an acceptable sacrifice to God unless it is undergone for an adequate and noble aim. It is needless to urge this point before a Jewish congregation. The God we worship and believe in is not an angry God. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked and in the sufferings of the good. Mortification and mutilation can win no favour from him. The sacrifice which God desires is not the crushed body, but the broken and the contrite heart. Nor is it by any means sure that there is any causal connection between the two. The starved body does not necessarily produce the developed mind, but is, on the contrary, hostile to its production. In spite of some evidence on the other side, there seems no reason to believe that asceticism as such, and practised for its own sake, leads to nobility of character. Directly the means are made the end, there is a danger lest human nature and human character become falsely one-sided and warped. Indian asceticism would seem to bear out this conclusion. Moreover, the ascetic in his mortification of the body exaggerates the importance of the body: he

devotes to it so much attention that he neglects the culture of the mind, and even the culture of the soul. Starve the body to feed the soul may be a right maxim, but the simultaneous starvation of both is obviously undesirable. Again, ascetism as an end is anti-social; though self-development is undoubtedly an end in itself, true self-development is not possible except in a society and by means of social acts. Lastly, happiness, in the higher sense of the word, is an end and not a means: if we rightly seek to increase the store of human happiness, and to diminish the amount of human pain, we must logically admit that for us, too, happiness and not pain, satisfaction and not suffering, is the goal at which we should aim. And if we seek to increase the happiness and diminish the pain of others during their life on earth, then we must also admit that happiness is, if not the goal, yet *a* goal, *an* end, if not *the* end, of our own earthly life as well.

So far, then, we may rightly go in our opposition to what we shall hold to be a false and even irreligious asceticism. It is, however, more important to consider that which may be said upon the other side, or rather to find out what is the nature of true asceticism, and what its bearing upon human life.

We agreed that the mortification of the body is no end in itself. But the discipline

or training of the body is a very different thing. It is at this point that the right asceticism may be said to begin. Though mind and body form an inseparable unity, we may, at least in thought, and for educational purposes, separate and deal with them individually. The body is not unreasonably described as the servant of the mind, for even the athlete's body, which might seem to be, and indeed is, far more important than his mind, has after all only value because a mind directs and controls it. But it was pointed out long ago by the old Greek philosophers that the training of the body as an end in itself is liable to lead to evil mental and spiritual results. The right *askesis* or discipline of the body for us all is that measure of training and development which will give the best chance and the largest opportunity for our minds and souls. Hence one reason of the great importance in early education of right bodily training. Hence, too, the religious duty of taking care of our bodily health. It might be supposed that this duty seems to point in the very opposite direction from asceticism; but this is not so. For the hardening and discipline of the body is no less a duty than the avoidance, if possible, of over-fatigue and excessive strain. How often this simplest and most necessary asceticism is neglected. A man says, "I know this food

or this drink is bad for me, but I like it, and I will take the consequences." It is a commonplace illustration enough, but it is a true illustration of a want of self-control, a lack of right asceticism. The pleasures of the body must be sacrificed for the sake of the mind and soul. And similarly must the argument run in regard to our entire material environment. Each one of us must apply the general principle to suit his own particular case. If a soft bed makes a man sleep too long, let him lie on a hard one; if wine makes another irritable, let him forswear it. Even a less negative asceticism may be rightly practised in the interests of higher and incorporeal ends. The great painter Watts, when quite a young man, found it desirable for the purposes of his art to get up at sunrise. To enable and school himself to rise readily at these early and changing hours, he slept for a long time upon the floor, in order that he might waken and rouse himself at the right hour without difficulty. This was a true asceticism. It was a hard discipline undertaken not for itself, but for an ideal and wholly different end. Directly the habit had been achieved, the mere means and method could be abandoned. So we may say of all bodily enjoyments, or indeed of all enjoyments whatever. So far as they are wholly without evil results for the mind and soul, they are not only not wrong,

but they are positively right. But directly they make us less good at our work, think less clearly, act less morally, diminish our output of good, they are for *us*, whatever they may be for others, illicit and immoral. This kind of asceticism, then, varies with every individual; it is a question of degree, though the principle remains the same. Two more things may be said of it. First, let our ascetic practices, so far as they may be necessary or helpful to us, be done quietly, simply, and without parade. Secondly, even if we practise none, because we need them or think we need them not, let us beware of laughing at them, whether in the general or in the particular. It is better to admire, even if we cannot practise, than to laugh and deride. The ascetic action of the great painter was only in so far eccentric as it indicated a capacity for self-denial and self-discipline beyond the common. It was not eccentric because it was silly or preposterous. The hardened body will on the average enable the mind and soul to achieve greater things—it will prove a better servant—than the body pampered and bloated in luxury and ease.

Asceticism is in one sense the negation of selfishness; in another sense it may be regarded as a phase of self-development. For he who would labour for the good of others, for the welfare of family, community, or state,

must first of all be master of himself. The familiar phrase, to be a slave of one's habits or passions or desires, contains a truth. Only he who is completely self-controlled and self-disciplined is really free, and spiritual freedom implies a measure of asceticism. Just as the old Rabbi argued that he who toils in the Torah, who, in other words, leads the consecrated life, must "live a life of trouble," so too he urged that no man is really free but "he who labours in the Torah." The finest life has often been described as conditional upon a kind of death. "Arise and fly," says the poet, "the reeling faun, the sensual feast; move upward, working out the beast, and let the ape and tiger die." The Talmud tells a story that Alexander of Macedon asked the "wise men of the South" what should a man do that he may live? And the answer was, "Let him die." So, too, a false life is said to be equivalent to a living death. That the higher may live it may even be necessary for the lower to die. Still, therefore, true asceticism is something positive: the rejection of the lower for the sake of the higher, a conscious loss for the sake of gain. The true ascetic is not less a man because of his asceticism: he is more a man. This distinguishes the false from the true. The false or erroneous ascetic loses without gain; the right ascetic gains through his loss.

We have already seen that man, though he regards the imitation of God as the ideal, is yet compelled to seek after that imitation by human means. For him the good, whether the good to be achieved *outside* him, through action, or the good to be achieved *inside* him, as character, can only be accomplished by effort, by endurance, by sacrifice, by the voluntary acceptance of pain, by the right usage of suffering and sorrow. The old Stoic maxim—"bear and forbear"—must still play its part in our lives, nor can we rightly assume that at any stage the time for it is over and gone. The good man, however easily he walk, however disciplined he be, can never wholly be safe from the chance of an occasional struggle. The sooner we are free of the burden of "chance-desires" the better; the sooner we are duty's bondmen the sooner we are truly free; but while we live on earth we can only move forward, we can never absolutely reach the goal.

"Wherefore be free of your harness betimes; but being free be assured,
That he who hath not endured to his death, from his birth he hath never endured."

But asceticism goes a step beyond endurance. It is one thing to bear sorrow bravely when it comes; it is another and a harder thing to stretch out the hand towards sorrow

and choose it as the higher lot. And yet this may be often enough the right thing for us to do. Asceticism need not merely mean bodily or sensual abstinence, or bodily suffering and pain; it also may be held to include the keener suffering of the mind. Duty and religion may bid us deliberately choose pain and reject pleasure, reject a proffered or possible happiness for the sake of others and for the sake of God. The martyrdom of faith may be rightly regarded as the highest asceticism. It is little enough that English Jews are usually called upon to sacrifice for their faith to-day, but this little is often denied. May it not be that we are wanting in the higher asceticism because we never practise the lower? Our training has become so pleasant: we so deliberately shield our children from hardships and endurance and suffering, that they do not obtain a sufficient field for the exercise of self-discipline and self-denial. It may furnish food for reflection how far this soft education, this perpetual screening and shielding, is really advisable. If pain is near, should we always meet it with laughing-gas?

The highest life, according to our text, is not to be won except through discomfort and strain. And, after all, it is the spiritual and the mental which alone gives value to the material. What is a beautiful view to an

animal? The *joie de vivre* is of small value except it be transfigured by mind and soul. The higher pains and sorrows are hardly known except to man, and strangely enough these higher pains and sorrows are human because man's earthly clod is disturbed by a spark of the divine. Once more we quote the poet:

> "Poor vaunt of life indeed,
> Were man but formed to feed
> On joy, to solely seek and find and feast:
> Such feasting ended, then
> As sure an end to men;
> Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the
> maw-crammed beast?"

Through suffering and endurance to the higher gladness, the higher satisfaction.

> "Then welcome each rebuff
> That turns earth's smoothness rough,
> Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
> Be our joy three parts pain!
> Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
> Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge
> the throe!"

Sleek comfort will not take men far in the knowledge of God. The fullest insight, the deepest faith, the noblest joy, the truest peace —these come from struggle, self-denial, and sorrow; in a word, the true ascetic best fulfils and best enjoys the command: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God."

XVI

Isaiah liii

I READ to you as the Scriptural lesson for this afternoon the most famous chapter of the Book of Isaiah. It owes its fame not, I admit, to its influence and importance in the history of Judaism, but to its influence upon the origin and development of Christianity. Yet when we say that, it by no means follows that the chapter has no interest for ourselves. For even apart from the special dogma of Christianity, there is such a thing as Christian civilisation, and we Jews of the West live and take part in it. But civilisation is a highly complicated product: all kinds of elements enter into it; a myriad causes have produced it. Among these elements and causes, Jewish thought and Christian thought, Greek thought and Roman thought, have contributed their quota. Religion is a part of this civilisation, and religion has helped to form it. But then, again, civilisation has reacted upon religion, and in each succeeding age moulds its

doctrines anew. But when a minority, professing in many important points a different religion, comes to live within this civilisation, and is freely admitted to its fruits and its spirit, the enfolding and permeating civilisation will affect this minority and even affect its religion, while the minority, both as regards religion and in other ways, may affect the civilisation. The influence I speak of is extremely subtle, but it is none the less real for this subtility. Thus it comes to pass that the Judaism—even the orthodox Judaism—of Western Christian countries will not be quite the same as the Judaism of Eastern Mohammedan countries. And even within the area of Christian civilisation there will be further and more delicate differences. I am not experienced or learned enough to prove it, but I should think it highly probable that the Judaism of England has many differences —not in rite or dogma, but in spirit which is greater than either—from the Judaism of Germany, while both Judaisms are probably different from the Judaism of France.

We must not be disturbed by this. No one would be agitated in admitting the influence of Greek thought upon such a book as the Wisdom of Solomon or upon the philosopher Philo. We feel that Judaism is the richer because we possess these writings. Similarly we need not be frightened by the influence of

Christian thought, which does not mean the same thing as Christian dogma. We talk sometimes of Christianity as the daughter religion. Now when mother and daughter live together for a long while, it not infrequently, indeed it naturally and even inevitably happens, that the daughter influences the mother, as well as the mother the daughter. Yet each retains and maintains her own separate individuality. We have to remember that God has thought it best to teach the world in many ways and through devious paths. He has allowed truth and error to grow up together like flowers on a single stem; nay, more, he has allowed truth to be even propagated by the very means, or under the shadow of error. Why he has done or suffered all this, I do not know. It does not suit our human logic or our human pride. We should prefer that there was no conceivable grace or truth or excellence which was not included in one religion, and that religion our own. We should like all other religions, except in so far as they copied our own, to be sheer falsehood. But God does not act so. It does not follow because one religion may be much truer than another, that there may not be some good thing, some aspect of truth, some moral excellence, which the less true religion may contain and teach

more prominently or more clearly than the truer religion. But if that is the way in which God, as it were, allows truth to grow in the world, it may be that one religion may have something to learn from another religion, even as that second religion has something to learn from the first. We shall not lessen the intense complexity of the ways of God by refusing to observe them closely.

The reflections which this vein of thought suggest to us are many. But now let us return to where we started, to the famous chapter of Isaiah.

It is a most unfortunate thing that the text of this chapter should be, in many crucial places, so very uncertain and even corrupt. If words could speak, perhaps these words could tell strange stories as to how some of them assumed their present form. We, however, have to deal with the chapter as it is, and to make the best of it. It has not been so badly injured that its main thought is not fairly discernible.

Who is the Servant of whom the poet-prophet speaks? And who are they who tell of the Servant's sorrows and death, and of his resurrection and glory? Both among Jewish and Christian interpreters there have been wide differences of opinion. The Servant is either an individual or he is a personification, and if he is a personification,

he may represent either the best spirits, the faithful in Israel, or he may stand for the people as a whole. As there are some among my hearers who may be puzzled by this chapter, or who may be unaware of the general opinion of the best modern scholars to-day, or who may have been bothered by silly conversionist tracts and out-of-date pamphlets, let me say at once that the most impossible of all interpretations of the Servant is the one which identifies him with the Founder of Christianity. For the tale of the suffering Servant is only a prophecy as regards the glory and the triumph: the sufferings and the death are either past or present. Thus, as the writer was describing the past and present as well as foretelling the future, he could not also have been predicting and delineating the life and death of some one who was born more than five hundred years after his own time.

In spite of occasional attempts to revive it, the individualistic interpretation of our chapter never rightly succeeds. And this is no wonder, seeing that the marks of personification are so exceedingly strong. An interesting point is that the form of the personification theory which was generally adopted by the Jewish theologians of the middle ages, is now the prevailing view of the best modern scholars. That view is this.

The Servant here in the 53rd chapter, as in the three other special passages of the Second Isaiah dedicated to his fortunes, is the people of Israel. And this 53rd chapter takes up and develops some of the ideas which have been indicated not only in the three other passages, but elsewhere too between the 40th and the 55th chapter. In the first section of our poem-prophecy the future exaltation and glory of the Servant are briefly contrasted with his present wretchedness and misery. In the second section, the nations — the Gentiles—become the speakers. The prophet transports himself and us into the coming age of glory—in the near advent of which he believed,—and the nations marvel at the wonderful change. Who could have believed, they say, what we now see and hear; who could have credited what the power of God has performed? Israel was despised and rejected; a puny people mocked at and disregarded. But great is now the change. Yet it is this change, this transformation, this resurrection to glory of the poor exile who had seemed to die, which have caused the scales to fall from their eyes. They now see the purport of Israel's sufferings. Israel suffered for their sakes to bring them enlightenment and peace. This is the central idea of the whole. It is not implied

that Israel was absolutely sinless, but he was so in comparison with the heathen. The history of Israel, his growth, his fall, his glory, reveal to the nations the truth of Israel's God and the World's. Israel accepted his calamities with resignation and humility; he went to his death voluntarily, for it was God's will, but he knew that his death was but the prelude to a better life. He died in exile among the wicked; he was to live again in his own land in glory.

The last section of the poem is painfully obscure. But this seems to be the tenor of its thought. The conception is extraordinarily bold; it is by no means free from difficulties; we have to supply a link here, a connecting thought there. But no other interpretation seems more likely for the whole. Every other has to make the Servant in this chapter different from the Servant in other chapters.

We cannot enter fully into the author's mind. He seems struggling with the expression of new ideas. Israel suffering for the nations—still more, Israel *voluntarily* suffering for the nations—was a new conception, which perhaps had not shaped itself to perfect clearness even to the prophet's own mind. All that he even dimly meant by it we can never know. But it remains the

highest conception of Israel's history and mission within the range of prophecy.

Even if this particular interpretation of our chapter be rejected, if the speakers in the central sections are supposed to be, not the Gentiles, but Israel, so that the Servant is not Israel as a whole, but the best, the faithful, the believers; or again, if the whole personification theory be abandoned, and the chapter (perhaps not written by the Second Isaiah) be thought to refer to a particular individual, one thing is at least clear: the hero, be he an individual, be he a people, or be he a part of a people, suffers, in the ordinary sense of the word, unjustly. He suffers and dies for the sake of others; moreover, he suffers and dies voluntarily.

The chapter records the story of a life or of lives which George Eliot has declared to be still the highest of all lives. In the noble proem to *Romola* she speaks of "willing anguish for a great end." She tells us that "men still yearn for the reign of peace and righteousness, still own *that* life to be the highest which is a conscious voluntary sacrifice."

The conception of self-sacrifice was first clearly taught among the Jews by the 53rd chapter of Isaiah.

Immense has been the development of the conception since our author wrote his great

poem more than two thousand four hundred years ago. But we still are invigorated by reading that great creation of religious genius, whether we think of self-sacrifice in the ordinary life of the individual, or whether, following in his footsteps, we seek to link the idea of it with the history and mission of Israel.

Let us consider, first of all, for a moment or two the effect of the conception of self-sacrifice upon our whole outlook upon life. Self-sacrifice is specifically human, but it is the revelation of the divine. There are adumbrations of it among the animals, where it seems to prefigure the higher glory of man. Self-sacrifice is the highest exemplification of the collective instinct in humanity. Man is a political animal, says Aristotle. Self-sacrifice is the flower and crown of the human commonwealth. It was a profound reflection of the Rabbis that the evil passion—the *yetzer ha' ra*,—from which we pray to be delivered, was not only the source of evil, but also the source of good. It would seem that both selfishness and unselfishness are in one sense or other needed for human advancement and civilisation. But the principle of each one for himself, even for the benefit of the whole, has to be constantly aroused and constantly checked by the counter-principle of sacrifice and surrender. It may indeed

be said that the highest life is as much self-development or self-attainment as it is self-surrender and self-sacrifice, but to say this does not in any way diminish the element of sacrifice. It does not make self-sacrifice less of a reality.

Again, self-sacrifice is the great palliative of evil. We do not understand the origin or the meaning of evil; but we may at least be permitted to think that one key to the mystery is that evil is the condition of self-sacrifice. Through the doctrine of self-sacrifice we see that there is a higher justice than retribution, just as there is a higher explanation of suffering than sin. The good suffer with the guilty, the good suffer for the guilty; human solidarity is not merely mechanical and necessary, but conscious and voluntary. If the great doctrine of the 53rd chapter of Isaiah had been more widely diffused and accepted in Jewish thought, many a hardness would have been obviated, many a crudeness avoided. A glory and a purpose would have been given to suffering; many an erroneous interpretation of it would not have prevailed; many a tender conscience would not have been hurt and seared in vain. To suffer *with* others may lend resignation; to suffer *for* others gives fortitude and purpose; it inspires with energy and love. It binds men together,

from the worst to the best; it binds them together before the single altar of the one God. Self-sacrifice is the mystic bond which unites the sinner with the saint; it is the redeeming force which transfigures the face of the world.

There are endless varieties of self-sacrifice. But in the sense in which I am speaking of it here, all self-sacrifice to be real and valid must be for the sake of others, or for the sake of some ideal cause which is for the benefit of others. Self-sacrifice is not sacrifice for sacrifice's sake. It is not to be done for the good of our own souls, but for the good of other people. Again, just as the Victoria Cross is not given for gallantry as such, but only for useful gallantry, so we may say that the right self-sacrifice is one in which the end justifies the means.

There are cases known to us all where people have ruined their health in the service of others and in the prosecution of duty. How far is such a sacrifice right? No general rule can be laid down. But one thing seems clear. The benefit of self-sacrifice even to others is not merely to be measured by the outward result. The sacrifice has a value in itself, over and above the other results achieved by it. We live by ideals and not merely by bread. Suppose a distinguished statesman or scholar or philanthropist happens

also to be a good swimmer, and might, though only at the risk of his own life, rescue a drowning man. Are we to say that he should refrain because he could spend his life more usefully? We should be led into the meshes of casuistry by such problems and calculations. It suffices to believe that the heroic deed has its own ideal value. The mere example of it may be a guide and a beacon to others.

There is a further variety of self-sacrifice which is specially alluded to in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. It is bearing another's sin. At first sight our common-sense and our sense of justice revolt from such a notion. How, we say, can or should one man bear the sins of another? Did not Ezekiel say that the son shall *not* bear the iniquity of the father, nor the father the iniquity of the son? It was a great truth which Ezekiel taught; but the severe doctrine of the second commandment also teaches, or rather can be made to teach (for it is probably not the original meaning) a second and complementary truth, while the 53rd chapter teaches yet a third. The family, the race, the community, are knit together by a myriad ties; few men can sin unto themselves or for themselves alone. But in the patient and even devoted acceptance of another's sin and shame the sinner may find

his healing. How often has the sinner of a family been saved from ruin by the self-sacrifice of a wife, a parent, or a child. Through their stripes, voluntarily accepted, he has been healed. This is the higher righteousness, the righteousness that transcends the justice of a tit for tat, the righteousness through which God is revealed. In a minor degree, we all may probably find some opportunity in our lives for the conscious acceptance of some hardship, some sorrow, some pain; through our acceptance and endurance of it another's head may be shielded from the blow.

The same kind of thing may take place as regards a community. There is a proverb which says, "All Israel are responsible to one another." We know how the sins of, let us hope, a small minority in Israel have to some extent to be borne by the whole community. The disgrace of a few falls to some extent upon all. Perhaps we do not sufficiently lift up this fact to the higher level of a moral and religious principle. It is for us to accept, consciously and voluntarily, this burden of disgrace and sin, and so to live and act as to redeem it. Because there are those who bring shame upon Israel, by so much the more must we bring honour. Because there are those who are slack and become apostate, by so much the more must we

hold fast and keep tight. We must seek to quench ignorance by knowledge, superstition by piety, indifference by religion, evil by goodness, and hatred by love. We must not sever ourselves from the common bond; we must try to emulate, even by a small inconvenience here, a petty renunciation there, the ideal of the Servant who, through his voluntary acceptance of sufferings and pains, opened the eyes of the blind and turned the sinner from his iniquity. When we have better fulfilled our duty to our own community, we may more justifiably boast of our mission to the world at large.

The conception of self-sacrifice is one of those religious and ethical ideals which we must attempt to translate into the theory and practice of education. We must teach our children that there is a double duty before them, a double ideal. They must get on, and they must give up; advance and renounce. Self-development on the one hand, self-denial upon the other. They must acquire and they must spend. Sometimes these two aims may be reconciled; in God's sight perhaps always, but not always among men. Our children must learn of the higher righteousness, according to which the good are not always happy, and the strong not always victorious, and the deserving not always crowned; the higher righteousness whereby

the weak are strengthened by the strong, and the strong, as man sees, become weaker, and the sinner is left unpunished, and the good suffers and is silent. They must be told that this is one of the ways in which God asks us to work for him and for his cause; and because it is God who asks us this and who has shown us this way, we may believe that all failure is but apparent, and that redeeming love will triumph at the close.

XVII

"Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen."—ISAIAH xliii. 10.

IF Israel possessed a charter, inscribed upon paper or parchment, these words might be its motto. They sum up very briefly, in simple but exalted epithets, the mission of Israel to the world. May I assume that they are extremely familiar to every man and woman present in this hall? We may compare them with the equally familiar passage in Exodus, where it is said: "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me from among all peoples: ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."

The words are familiar. But do we always interpret them in the best possible way? Do they help to make us better men and women, less selfish, less mean, less sensual, more just, more honest, more humble, than we should be without them?

The words constitute the Jews into a sort of religious aristocracy—a most dangerous

position, full of moral and religious temptations. We hear a good deal of the faults of aristocracies; we hear, too, something of their virtues. What about the Jewish aristocracy? Has the peculiar position which they have claimed for themselves, though little acknowledged by others, done them more benefit than harm, or more harm than benefit? There is a good pride and there is a bad pride. Is Jewish pride oftener bad than good, or oftener good than bad?

Let us first of all look a little more closely at the meaning of the words themselves. They clearly imply some sort of relation to those who are not Israelites. "Witnesses" must give their witness to somebody or for somebody; priests must do priestly work for those who are not priests. The relation is not one of superiority, but of service. This is the essence of the whole matter. There are other, more prevailing, but lower views of the relation of Israel to the nations, both in the Talmud and in the Bible; some of these views are, to my mind, false and hurtful —false, because they contain or imply a false conception of God and of his dealings with man; hurtful, because they tended to do those who have held them moral and religious harm rather than moral and religious good.

We will, however, keep to the highest and best view of the relation, as embodied and

expressed in our text and in the quotation from Exodus. And even to these passages we will seek to give the highest and best interpretation. The relation of Israel to the nations is, then, to be one of service. They are to gain by what Israel has to give them. Through his stripes, as the same prophet afterwards says, they shall be healed.

If this be the right interpretation of the relation, it is easy to see how important it is, and to what evil practical results a wrong interpretation can lead. At the same time, such misinterpretation is not to be wondered at. For there is a perilous exaltation in the very conception as it stands. "Witnesses to God," "peculiar treasure," "kingdom of priests"; what big words are these! Of course they may be—some think they are—mere human fabrication, without any authority or inspiration; a mere empty breath and invention. If they are only that, we need not bother our heads about them. But on the hypothesis that they are more than that, and that those who wrote them were not wholly without the Spirit of God, it is clear that they make great claims and are thus liable to grave perversions.

Rightly interpreted, they may evoke a good and wholesome pride, which is only the other side of a deep and keen humility; wrongly interpreted, they lead to a carnal

and evil pride, which may produce nasty and disagreeable results.

The truth is that the conception of the Peculiar Treasure and of the Witnessing has been one very difficult to keep at a high spiritual level. When Israel first became conscious of its peculiar religious position and superiority, a position which compelled a certain distinctness and aloofness from other races and peoples, it was not easy for it to perceive the true nature of that superiority, and the full religious consequences of that position. The errors into which it fell, the false pride which often pushed the good pride out of existence, are not even yet wholly eradicated. The crimes of others have contributed to them, and the crimes of others—still continuing—help to maintain them. We cannot, alas! prevent the crimes of others, but we can force ourselves to confess our own errors, we can look them in the face, and seek to remedy them.

The wrong interpretation of the Peculiar Treasure and of the Witnessing makes it a relation not of service, but of superiority. The Jews, it holds, are a chosen people. The One and all-righteous God cares for them more than he cares for other men. They are nearer to him. If the Jews suffer more than other races upon earth, this is because they are to have a better and more glorious

future. They are a treasure, not because they are an instrument, but in themselves. And, again, it has been thought that the Jews are wiser and better and nobler than other people, intrinsically a higher type of humanity. From their lofty position of superiority they may despise others, because they are better than others, just as they are also nearer to and more beloved of God. Others have persecuted them and done them foul and bitter wrong; but in the future, whether on earth or in heaven, the tables will be turned, and Israel will triumph over its foes. The superiority of nature, the greater nearness to God, will be proved by facts. By these hostile feelings—justified in a measure though they be—all idea of service, as opposed to superiority, fades away. Israel and the nations are enemies; in the see-saw of history the one triumphs to-day, the other will triumph to-morrow. Or, again, the Peculiar Treasure has been thought to mean that the Jews must keep themselves always rigidly apart from the nations, not for the nations' sake, but for their own. For they are holy; the others are profane. They are pure; the others are polluted. The holy people must draw its skirts away from contact with the unclean.

All this seems to me, while intelligible, yet false and wrong. Such ideas are liable to do those who hold them moral and religious

injury rather than benefit. By such outward conception of nearness to God, we are likely to get farther away from him. Whatever the Peculiar Treasure and the Witnessing may rightly mean, they cannot mean something which conflicts with the highest conceptions of righteousness. The perfect righteousness of God cannot be partial; it cannot place one people before another. It must regard all men as his children; his love must embrace them all. Nor can we look either upon this world or the next as a vast theatre for the exhibition of the one single principle of retribution, of punishment and reward. Retribution is not a false principle, but we perceive that it is crossed by another principle yet higher, the principle of sacrifice. Because, in a family, one member has voluntarily suffered and forgone for the sake of another, even to heal another of his sin, it would be a low conception of God and of the life to come to hold that the sufferer must be outwardly rewarded in exact proportion to his suffering; the sinner punished in exact proportion to his sin. And apart from these theological considerations, all pride, all contempt, all holding up the skirts, are bad and useless and mere negation. Religion and religious work can only progress by what is positive and useful—by righteousness, sacrifice, and service.

The Witnessing must be positive. Take the point about the Unity of God—a cardinal dogma of Judaism. We must hold it, not negatively but positively. It is not enough to assert that there are not two Gods or three Gods, for the deeper question remains: What sort of One God is God? What kind of unity do you proclaim? What is the relation of the One God to the world, to humanity, to the individual human soul? A mere bare and bald Unity cannot correspond to the rich reality of the Divine Father, nor can it help us in our human needs.

"Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen." People say that the mere continuance of the Jews, after so many centuries of persecution, is a witness to the truth of their religion, to the existence of God. I do not deny it; but nevertheless mere continuance is not enough. If, in days past and in other lands, the Jews witnessed to God by dying for him, here in England they must witness to him by living for him; their lives must show the *kind* of God they believe him to be. We have to show by our lives our conception of the character of God and of his relation to man. The witnesses to the righteous God must themselves be righteous. Witnesses to the loving God must themselves be loving. Witnesses to the God who, according to the

striking utterance of the Rabbis, is not only exalted but humble, must themselves be conspicuous in humility.

If the mission to be God's witnesses have any meaning whatever, it has a tremendous meaning; it is a tremendous responsibility, or it is a figment. Upon the hypothesis that it is not a figment, the only other possible alternative comes to the fore. It is a big and solemn reality. It is, moreover, not easy, but very difficult. It has this initial difficulty, to which so many of us have succumbed at the outset, that it demands a peculiar combination of humility and pride. There must be pride in the mission and the charge; but for the individual missionary there must be humility and self-abasement.

A Jew may be proud of his race for what it has done and suffered; he may be proud of his religious brotherhood for the mission which God has given it, but *individually* he must be all the humbler. The greater your office, the more must you feel your personal unworthiness; the more completely must you throw yourself upon the strength and mercy of God. To use pride of race as a pretext or cloak for apathy, license, pride, or contempt is the supremest degradation. The bad Jew is doubly bad. He is a sort of living, corporeal blasphemy; a constant and

practical refutation of the righteous God. For if the good Jew is God's witness, the bad Jew is his denial.

By "bad" I mean morally bad, quite apart from any question of religious observance. I fear that we have talked so much about Jewish virtues that we too often shut our eyes to Jewish faults. But the frank recognition of sin is the first small step to its cure. The peculiar position of the Jews during the centuries, their constant persecution and degradation, have led, as was only natural, to peculiar virtues and to peculiar vices. Persecution produces heroes, but, alas, it also produces sinners. It enables men and women to endure sorrows and suffering unspeakable sooner than deny their spiritual birthright or their religious convictions, but it also tends in many cases to degrade and stifle and starve the moral and religious capacities of the human soul. And this is the most terrible result of all. It is bad enough to hurt the body, but it is far worse to hurt the soul. Then, too, there is the reaction from persecution. There are the special dangers of new environment, of liberty, of enlightenment, of prosperity. The serf, suddenly made free, does not always show himself capable of using his freedom to worthy ends. No longer the slave of others, he becomes the slave to

himself. But only the freeman, in the higher sense of the word, can witness to the freedom of God. He who is in bondage to his own passions, whether it be the passion of gambling, or the sin of unchastity, has forfeited his place and renounced his vocation. The hypocrite also, and the proud, the sordid seeker for gold and the sordid seeker for pleasure—all these are useless and faithless; no witnesses they to the stainless purity and the supreme righteousness of God.

The ideal of the Witnessing and of the Peculiar Treasure is high. But if high, it is stimulating. No ideal can be too high. "A man's reach must exceed his grasp." The ideal must ever elude attainment; it must beckon us forward to an ever-distant goal. Do not ask for low ideals: the lower the ideal, the lower the life which accepts it.

How, then, are we to witness unto God? There is nothing difficult about the answer, though difficult be the fulfilment. The method is certain, though the accomplishment be hard.

The full Witnessing can only be effected and carried out by a combination of moral and religious means. Neither will do, neither is adequate, by itself. The Jew who says he believes in God, but who leads a bad life, denies his belief by his practice. Either he is a hypocrite or a weakling. In both cases

he dishonours the Jewish cause and defames the glory of God. The Jew who leads a good life, but who does not believe in God, causes less harm than the other; but to the full cause of Judaism he does very inadequate good. We want both the belief as well as the practice; the religious life and the moral life: we want them knit together in one flawless unity, imitating, at however great a distance, the perfect Unity of God.

If I speak a word of the moral life by itself, and then of the religious life, this is separating, for purposes of practical convenience, what ought never to be separated in practice. It is their combination with each other which gives to each its special and its highest value. Yet righteousness and truth are real witnessing to God. Goodness proclaims the source of goodness. To quench any temptation to unchastity of deed or thought is good witnessing to God. A great characteristic of Judaism is its insistence upon the interconnection of religion and morality: the mingling of the love of God with the love of man. The temptations to evil are many. We cannot have too many good motives to help us in resisting evil and in doing good. We can find one great and powerful motive in this idea of the witnessing, in the belief that when we conquer a temptation we are bearing witness

to God and fulfilling our special mission, and that when we yield to the temptation, we are, to that extent, denying and blaspheming him, to that extent proving false to the charge which God, through his inspired prophets, long ago laid upon us, and from which we cannot shake ourselves free. And yet with this special motive to sustain and stimulate us, we must not feel ourselves better than other people if we succeed, but we must feel ourselves much worse than other people if we fail. The bad Jew is more degraded; he should be wrung and tortured with more terrible remorse.

Then, secondly, we want the religious life. Humbly, quietly but persistently, let us attempt to put the thought of the Divine into our daily tasks, to weave the love of God into the texture of our lives. We cannot do without religious forms; we are not strong enough for that. As the late Bishop of London well said: "Without outward helps to spiritualise life, I am afraid that I for one am too feeble to get on." And that is one reason why we need the practice of prayer, both in private and in public; that is why we do well to come regularly to public religious services, and to gain from them a quickening of our religious life, a fuller conviction of the presence and power of God.

We should feel, as Jews, a certain consecration upon our lives. No holy oil is poured upon us; no ordination service is gone through. But we shall never be witnesses of the right sort unless we possess this feeling of consecration. We need not be less gay and happy—where circumstances permit—than other men; we fail utterly if we think ourselves better than other men; but we should feel that we have a peculiar duty, a peculiar compulsion, to lead severe, holy, and consecrated lives. Not unwittingly or carelessly do I use the word "severe." For if we are to be a race apart, a kingdom of priests, such a claim can only be sustained, and is only then not ridiculous, if there be a touch of holiness and moral severity in our conduct and way of living. Shakespeare says:

> "He who the sword of heaven will bear,
> Should be as holy as severe."

We do not bear the sword of heaven, but we have been called to be the witnesses of heaven. And therefore, even as of God it was said: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory," so for us—men and women alike—there is still ordained the imperishable charge: "Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy."

XVIII

"The just shall live by his faith."—HABAKKUK ii. 4.

SOME months back a deeply sincere member of the most orthodox section of our community enunciated by implication, and indeed almost in set terms, a statement which little more than a hundred years ago would have been regarded by orthodox Jews as either a contradiction in terms or as a heresy. Yet not only the speaker, but his audience, were apparently unconscious that anything had been said which was not both obvious and orthodox. It seems worth while to examine somewhat closely a statement involving so striking a revolution of thought. It is all the more worth while to do so because the statement is one of extreme interest, and raises delicate and perplexing questions concerning both ethics and religion. Put very briefly, the statement was as follows: It is possible for a person professing the Jewish religion to be a very good man and a very bad Jew.

Now, as I have just said, this statement

would have been regarded by orthodox Jews from the age of Hillel to the age of Mendelssohn as either self-contradictory or heretical. Yet in the year 1905 it is assumed by a sincerely orthodox Jew as a commonplace truth which needs no proof. He had no suspicion that he was saying anything which, on the one hand, was not perfectly clear and intelligible, and which, on the other hand, was not perfectly traditional and orthodox.

A Jew can be a very good man but a very bad Jew. This is the statement. Let us now proceed to draw the statement out; to ask what does it mean? What does it mean upon the surface to those who lightly enunciate and use it? what does it mean and imply when we look more deeply into it, and press it to its full conclusions?

It is likely enough that many persons present to-day will also be disposed to regard the statement as obvious and unexceptionable. We are all agreed, they would say, as to what goodness is: we differ about religion. There are good men belonging to every faith, and to every variety of every faith. Assuming that the good Jew is he who believes certain theological doctrines, and performs certain religious rites and ceremonies, one may believe and perform, and yet one may be a scamp; while, conversely, one may at least *partially* disbelieve, and one may *wholly* not

perform, and yet one may be morally an excellent man. Even orthodox Jews and Christians, it may be urged, now admit that the heretic may be morally one of the best of men.

Surely all this is commonplace and every-day truth. Well, it is indeed partially true, and at the present time it is certainly commonplace. It is undoubtedly the fact that morally good lives may consort with the most various religious opinions. The orthodox and heterodox Christian, the orthodox and heterodox Jew, can and do live excellent moral lives. And if Judaism consists in believing certain doctrines and performing certain rites, it seems obvious that he who neither fully believes nor fully performs can yet be morally an excellent man.

The measure of truth in this teaching I shall not discuss to-day. To-day, on the contrary, I shall point out, not the elements of truth and value which the statement may contain, but its elements of falsehood and danger.

When it is asserted that a good man may be a bad Jew, what precisely is meant by the words "a bad Jew"? They mean that the Jew in question does not observe certain rites and that he disbelieves certain dogmas.

If, then, the bad Jew in this sense is a good man, it follows that it is not moral

goodness which makes the *good Jew*, even though it would be freely acknowledged that the good Jew must be also morally good. It would be admitted that moral goodness is a constituent feature of the good Jew, but it is urged that if in a Jew other features, which are not themselves moral goodness, though they may produce it, are wanting, then the man cannot be a good Jew. A good Jew, it would be argued, is, as it were, made up of two parts. In the first place, he must be a good man; but, secondly, over and above being a good man, he must possess certain extra qualities, which are not specifically moral; he must, that is, observe certain rites and believe certain dogmas.

Hence we observe that the centre of gravity of a man's Jewishness lies outside morality; in other words, outside character. Though righteousness is necessary to make the Jew good, a Jew may be as righteous as you please, and he is not necessarily a good Jew.

But this is not all. A faith in the pure Unity of God is not enough to make the good Jew. The Mohammedan, the Unitarian, the Theist, may all have a passionate faith in the One God, but this faith does not make them Jews. Hence though a faith in God may be one necessary quality in the good Jew, a Jew may be as righteous, and

have as passionate a faith in God as you please, and nevertheless he is by no means necessarily a good Jew.

Now the prophet Micah is reported to have said: "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Are we, then, to say about this statement: "Yes; that is all that is wanted to make a good man, but it is not all that is wanted to make a good Jew. For to be a good Jew one must be a good man and something more. It is this *something more* which turns the good and even the religious man into the good Jew."

Surely this result is unsatisfactory. If the specific doctrines and rites which constitute the *Jewishness* of the good Jew are *extras*, added on to all that makes the good and even the religious man, this is a serious reflection upon Judaism.

The doctrine that the very good man can be a very bad Jew turns the prophetic essentials into accessories, and the accessories into essentials. The extras are the real Jewish element, and Micah, if he meant to define the good Jew, was thoroughly mistaken.

In truth, the doctrine that the very good man can be a very bad Jew rests *partly* upon a false generalisation from the modern theory of toleration, and *partly* upon the natural,

but highly erroneous, idea that that which is most specifically *Jewish* in Judaism must be those dogmas and rites which are not held or practised by anybody except Jews. Nothing seems to me more dangerous or more unhealthy than this conception. The doctrine of the unity and righteousness of God is held by many persons who are not Jews. Are we therefore to say that the unity and righteousness of God is not a specifically Jewish doctrine? The lower animals have brains. Are we therefore to say that brains are not essential features of our physical humanity? The prophets of Israel said that Judaism consisted in a belief in one God and in the practice of virtue. But other people who are *not* Jews say that *their* religion, or that religion generally, consists in a belief in one God and in the practice of virtue. Was, then, the prophetic definition of Judaism wrong? Let us rather say that it was *incomplete*, but never let us believe that it was wrong. But if it was mainly *right*, then it follows that if a Jew believes in God and is a good man, he must, at least to a *considerable* extent, be also, and be therefore, a good Jew.

The statement that the good man can be a bad Jew tends to degrade Judaism. For it tends to make people think and believe that what is specifically Jewish in a Jew's

religion has little to do with morality or with character. For if the specific doctrines and rites of Judaism are above and beyond all that which makes a good man good, then, though they may be wholly true, they apparently can have but small relation to *goodness* and but small connection with *character*. And this is degrading. For any doctrine which loosens the vital connection of Judaism with sanctity of life and righteousness of will tends to degrade it. And the statement is also dangerous. For if the good man can be a bad Jew, and the essence of Judaism is thus placed outside righteousness and character, there will inevitably be an occasional tendency to reverse the proposition, and to assume, explicitly or implicitly, the deadly heresy that the bad man can yet be a good Jew.

We see, then, that the statement that the very good man can be a very bad Jew—seemingly so simple, so obvious, and so tolerant — yet contains serious flaws. It makes the essence of Judaism to lie in its less important and non-ethical elements. And more than this. For the statement, in its excessive humility and toleration, maintains that faith in the one and Holy God — not merely belief in him, but the *faith* which pours over into sanctified life—is not specifically Jewish. Surely, argues the statement — if we may personify it — the

Unitarian or the Theist has this faith even in the same monotheistic form as Judaism. *Therefore* this faith is not specifically Jewish. And thus the very kernel and essence of the Jewish religion is degraded in import and Jewishness, and the holy will and the sanctified life, which spring from, and are fed by, the faith in God, become less Jewish than the belief in the date of a book or the maintenance of some outward dietary law. Was I not right in saying that this seemingly liberal and harmless statement tends to the degradation of Judaism?

A second flaw in the statement is that it tends to lower the conception and position of faith in Judaism. For the religious faith which Judaism requires should surely be the highest and best faith. Now such a faith, through which, as Habakkuk says, the just man lives, is not assent to the verbal accuracy of certain statements in certain books: it is faith in the living God and in his relation to every human soul. The faith which sanctifies heart and life is a different thing, as Dr. Martineau says, from a religion "made up of all sorts of antiquarian and literary and logical assents about authenticity and credibility and miracles." There may even be, as he asserts, in any given individual or group, an increase of theological doubt and of devotional affection: less belief and

more faith. The belief in dates and authorships, or the practice of rites, may indeed *become* faith, or be a part of faith. The conviction that God gave a perfect code to Moses as the outward expression of his will may flow over into men's hearts and lives; the practice of this code, even in sheer externalities, may exercise a sanctifying influence upon character: but the real *cause* of this influence, the transfiguring touch which transforms belief into faith, is only a modification of a fundamental trust in the living God. The mere *belief* that Moses wrote the Pentateuch has no sanctifying influence upon life: it can only *obtain* this influence when it is linked up with, and forms a part of, the believer's faith in God and in his ethical relations with man. But directly the stress is laid upon the belief in the authorship and the miracles rather than in the God behind and before them, in the outward conformity of practice rather than in the sanctified heart and life which this practice is to produce and express, Judaism and religion are coarsened and degraded. The tendency then becomes rampant to throw the essence and characteristic of Judaism, upon the side of faith, into mere intellectual *beliefs*, and upon the side of practice, into mere outward and soulless conformity. And these things are not religion, just as they are not morality.

The faith which is characteristic of Judaism must issue in a holy life. Doubtless this faith can be intellectually expressed in verbal propositions. These propositions deal with God and his relation to man, as well as with man and his relation to God. They make up a certain belief, which is the dogmatic substratum of the essential Jewish faith. But the faith is more than they, for no mere set of propositions, though accepted by the intellect as true, can dominate the will and fashion the character. Or rather, when the propositions do this, they have ceased to be mere propositions, accepted by the intellect as true: they have become faith, the faith through which the just man lives. Now since Judaism demands such a faith—a faith in God and in man which produces holy living—the good Jew possesses this faith in a special degree. It is through this faith that the good Jew is a good man. The bad Jew cannot have this faith. Conversely, the good man, who is good through this faith, cannot be a bad Jew. He must, just because he is good through this faith, be necessarily a good Jew. No very good man, who through this faith is good, can be a very bad Jew.

Let me once more say the same thing in slightly different words. For the subject is so important, and at the same time so difficult,

that iteration is justified if it tends to clearness and comprehension.

Faith, then, is more than belief. Faith penetrates the heart and informs the will. For belief to be transformed into faith, it must become so part and parcel of a man's being as to determine his feelings and his action. The more vital and powerful the faith, the more must it flow over into corresponding deed. In this sense only do the just live by their faith. And if a man calls and feels himself a Jew, if his faith fulfils the prophetic tests of Judaism, if, stated in verbal propositions, it consists in a belief in the unity and righteousness of God, and in the belief that the service of God is realised in the service of man, if *this* be the faith by which he lives, and which flows over into his will and his deeds, we cannot call this faith un-Jewish. Just because it is rooted in God, and bears the fruit of righteousness, it is Jewish, and the Jew, who, through this faith, is a good man, cannot be a bad Jew.

Far truer, then, than the statement that the good man can be a bad Jew are the statements that the bad Jew must be a bad man, and that the Jew who, through his faith in God, is a good man, must be also a good Jew. If the prophetic tests are accepted, though I do not affirm that such

a good man is a *perfect* Jew, yet a bad Jew he cannot be. No false humility must blind us to the prophetic truth. Faith in the One and Holy God, a life which expresses this faith in will and deed—here and not elsewhere lies the essence of Judaism.

XIX

"Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes."—ISAIAH liv. 2.

SOME weeks ago I discussed from this place the interesting but difficult problem whether a good man could be a bad Jew. It is possible that some of the conclusions which were then attained may have seemed based upon double meanings of words, and therefore to have lacked assurance and conviction. At any rate, the subject with its implications is so important that it seems well worth while to consider it afresh from a different point of view.

We shall all, I hope, agree that some measure of religious belief is necessary to constitute the Jew. Birth is adequate as a test of race; it does not suffice for religion. Again, practice is only *then* an indication and expression of religion when it is based upon belief, and is the outcome of religious faith. A man may follow every Rabbinical and Pentateuchal law, but he is none the more a

Jew, in any religious sense, if he does not follow and obey these laws from religious convictions. If he obeys them to please his relatives, or not to give offence, or from social convention, or from motives of health, or as a bond of racial unity, each and all of these reasons may be excellent and praiseworthy, but they have nothing to do with religion. One might be a complete atheist, and yet from one or other of these motives fulfil, with consistency and uprightness, every detail of the Pentateuchal and Rabbinic law. The test of religion is faith. This assertion may seem startling, but it is not un-Jewish. It has nothing to do with the theological question of justification by works and justification by faith. It is obvious that a man who says that he believes the Thirteen Articles of Faith in the Jewish Prayer-Book may yet be a consummate scamp; it is equally obvious that a man may only believe half of them, and nevertheless be a more religious as well as a more moral man. But none the less, no deed is religious which does not spring from a religious motive, and this motive must itself involve some belief, however feeble, however unsystematic. The higher human actions depend on, and issue from, a more definite faith. In Judaism, as in other religions, there must be doctrines and dogmas. The only question is, What are they?

At a recent meeting of this Union the subject was broached whether an attempt should not be made to discover the *minimum* of faith which constitutes the Jew, the minimum which must be expected or demanded of all, if they can rightly regard themselves as Jews, and by others be rightly so regarded. The idea of finding a minimum is liable to some misapprehension. It was not intended to convey the insinuation that the great thing is to believe as little as possible. Nor again is the quest for a minimum desired or desirable in order to discover how *little* we need believe, and how little we need *care*. A minimum in quantity or extent has nothing to do with intensity or degree. A simple Theist may have a great deal more faith than a tepid Roman Catholic, though the latter officially believes a far larger number of dogmas than the former. Quantity is often the antithesis of quality. Again, the search for a minimum does not imply that there cannot rightly exist many shades and differences of belief within the ranks of the adherents of any one religion; and finally, the question, What is the minimum? is not by any means equivalent, in our particular case, to asking, What are the religious dogmas of the Jewish Religious Union? For within our Union, as well as within the Synagogue as a whole, there may justifiably be included a number of different believers,

some of whom believe more, some less, some who hold a given dogma in one form or shade of it, and some who hold it in another. This Union, above all other organisations, should scruple to set up any rigid tests and definitions, just as this Union, above all other organisations, should not wish to make things easy for the lazy thinker, the feeble doubter, the half-hearted believer in the living God.

The suggested inquiry is equivalent to asking, What are we to regard to-day as the essential doctrines of Judaism? And the main reason why such a question is worth putting and worth answering is that we may convert a large number of nominal Jews into keen and professing Jews, and prevent the gradual defection of a large number of others. In the interests of Judaism, but as I also believe, in the interests of religion and of the individual, it is desirable that every born Jew and Jewess should be, at one and the same time, religious and keenly conscious that his religion is Jewish, a legitimate phase of Judaism, rightly called and labelled by that historic name. Thus if I argue that many doctrines which used to be considered, and are still considered by some, as essential elements of Judaism, need not be so regarded, if I desire to contract the minimum below the bulk which was fixed by Maimonides, the reason for doing so, my interest in the whole

attempt, are purely religious. It is for the sake of religion, for the sake of Judaism, for the sake of individual Jews. If the Jewish minimum includes doctrines which the growing thought of the world is rapidly abandoning, what can be the future of Judaism? It must become more and more certainly a religion of the past, a survival, destined perhaps to a very lengthy period of decay, but still to decay and not to growth, to stagnation or dissolution instead of to progress and development. I am loth to believe that such a future for Judaism can be for the benefit of religion. I feel convinced that it cannot be for the benefit of the Jews. Only, as it seems to me, from some phase of their own religion, consciously accepted and adhered to as such, can Jews live the best religious life, or find the fullest religious profit for their own souls. We want to keep all whom we legitimately can keep under our own flag. We want them not merely to swell our numbers—mere numbers are of small importance — but we want their service, we want their reasoned and yet ardent conviction. We want Judaism to be their religious home, the source of their religious emotions, the fountain-head of their religious thought. Judaism is to keep their religious life fresh and keen, so that they may not only help the larger whole of which they form a part, but themselves be helped by its

larger life, quickened and refreshed by its fuller spirit. It is for these reasons that we say: "Lengthen thy cords, enlarge the place of thy tent."

Now if we examine the document in the ordinary prayer-books called the "Thirteen Principles of the Faith"—Roots, or Articles, or Fundamental Dogmas would, by the way, be a fairer translation than Principles—we shall see that they fall into two main groups or divisions. The first division, including Principles 1-5, 10, 11, and 13, consists of eight articles; the second, including Principles 6-9 and 12, consists of five. The first division deals with certain general matters concerning the nature of God and man, and their relations to one another; the second deals with matters relating to the Bible. The first is independent of historical investigation and critical research; the second makes statements which come inevitably and properly before their forum and control. And it seems to me that the minimum of doctrine which we are seeking, or as I should prefer to put it, the essence and core of Judaism, reside in the first division and not in the second. It is this which gives to Judaism its peculiar capacity for enduring and surviving the shocks of criticism; it is this which roots it firmly amid the eternal verities of God. Within this division of the articles fall the

doctrines upon which the prophets of old so constantly insisted; here come, or can come, the doctrines of the unity of God, of his perfect righteousness, of his relations with man. Here can come the doctrine that the service of God is to be best found in the service of men; here the vital doctrine (though Maimonides oddly enough passes it over) that man is not without a spark of the divine fire. Here can be included the doctrine that there is some real influence of God upon man, some living relation between the human spirit and the divine spirit. Here can be stated the doctrine that the love of God is the highest religious attitude; the doctrine that the natural passions and instincts of man are to be sanctified and moralised by right ethical and religious training. Here can be included the doctrine, though not in the form in which Maimonides states it, that the destiny of the individual soul is not cut off for ever by earthly death. In short, the first division of Maimonides' articles either contains, or can readily be rearranged, modified, and amplified so as to contain, all that teaching about God and his relation to man, and about man and his relation to God, upon which most modern Jews are agreed. It is these things, I contend and submit, which constitute the desired minimum, the essence of Judaism.

And here let me at once allude to a criti-

cism which was made upon my former sermon about the bad man and the good Jew. I had quoted the old familiar saying of Micah that what God required of man was to do righteousness, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God. I pointed out that a man who fulfilled Micah's requirements, but left other, more ceremonial matters undone, might be an incomplete Jew, but could not be a bad one. To which argument somebody replied by urging that such a person could be equally regarded as an incomplete Roman Catholic, but not as a bad one. Now nothing could suit my argument better than this suggestion. For my point is, that what differentiates Judaism from at least *most* phases and forms of Christianity is, first, that it is not dependent upon the verbal accuracy of the statements contained in a book, and, secondly, that it does not include among its essential requirements a belief in dogmas built up out of supposed historical events, the exact nature and accuracy of which can never be convincingly ascertained. Judaism, or at all events, the newer or liberal Judaism for which I am contending, takes its stand upon doctrines which critical and historical research cannot affect or undermine.

But now I shall once more be confronted with a frequent charge and objection. Is

not Judaism, above all other religions, an ancient and historical religion? Are not the Jews, above all others, the people of the Book? And, secondly, if the doctrines of Judaism are independent of criticism and of historical investigation, in what does Judaism differ from the undogmatic offshoots of Christianity, such as Theism or even Unitarianism? why are Theists not Jews, or why are Jews not Theists?

I do not think that these questions need affright us, or that, fairly faced and fairly answered, they will invalidate my position. I too glory in the fact that Judaism is an ancient and historical religion. I too claim all the strength which a long and not inglorious history can add to our ethical teachings and our religious doctrines. The Hebrew Bible need be no less dear to us; we shall value its truth no less highly. This ethical Theism in which we find the essence of Judaism, is it not the kernel of both the prophets and the law? Is it not ours by right of origin and history? Is it not ours by heritage and descent? The very fact that the old Jewish prophets irrevocably linked morality and religion, goodness and God, together, adds strength to Judaism, and warmth to the teaching which we have declared to be its essence. However far and wide these doctrines of God and righteous-

ness may have travelled since the days of Amos and Isaiah, whatever conquests they have made, they have not lost their Jewish character, they are not false to their Jewish origin.

Nor need those only regard their religion as historical who assert that every verse of the Pentateuch is equally inspired, or who will apply no test or touchstone to distinguish between true and false, higher and lower, gold and dross. The history of the Jews and of Judaism is not without its divine element; it is not scraped bare of God because it is a human history told in a human record. What precisely may be the modes in which the spirit of man is touched and inspired by the spirit of God we do not know; the finger of God can be traced with no perfect clearness amid the tangled skeins of human history. We may devise theories to account for the intermingling of evil with good, of false with true; we may discern an upward growth, a gradual development in man's knowledge of God and in his realisation of righteousness. But whatever our theory, and whatever our difficulties, we remain convinced that the great teachers of mankind, and the great events which have helped forward the characters of men, are not the mere issue of chance, but are due to the righteous will and control of the living and

everlasting God. It is not the thunder and the trumpet or the divine voice which can give a touch of divinity to the Ten Commandments; it is not the lack of them which will remove it. The Ten Commandments are divine because of their own intrinsic greatness, because of their beneficent effects in human history, because, in brief and pregnant phrase, they anticipate or epitomise a large portion, an important aspect, of the inspired teaching of Amos, of Hosea, and Isaiah.

Yet one other doctrine there is, one belief, one article of faith, which must be included within the minimum, and added to the general dogmas about God and man and their relations to each other. It constitutes a sort of alternative or equivalent to those other five articles in the list of Maimonides which we have regarded as outside our minimum or essence. It is an inference drawn from history; but it is also an expectation or belief for the future. That doctrine, in common language and hackneyed phrase, is called the Mission of Israel. In one shape or another it seems to me that this doctrine must form part of the faith of every Jew. For what does this doctrine mean? It means at the least this: it means that the function of Judaism is not over, that it has its place and purpose in the present and in the future.

It means, in the opinion of those who hold it, that it were not well for the Jews themselves, and it were not for the religious benefit of the world that Judaism, as a separate and distinct religious creed, should cease to exist. As to the far-reaching implications of this belief, the *legitimate* influences from it bearing upon our every-day life, I cannot now speak. But this at any rate is clear, and this at any rate can be insisted upon now: that if the function and purpose of Judaism are not over, if it still has a place to fulfil and an office to serve in the religious development of the world, then it becomes of importance to quicken the religious consciousness of every born Jew. If the essence of Judaism lies in a certain faith about God and man and their relation to each other, and not in dogmas which depend upon miracles recorded in a book or upon the date of a code, then it is of moment and urgency to point out to those who share this faith that they need not and should not transfer their religious allegiance, or be doubtful as to their true religious dwelling-place. Ours they are, and ours they must remain. Jews they are, and Jews they must feel themselves to be. They possess the root of the matter. Let them hold fast to it. Let them not be discouraged. He who possesses the Jewish faith about God

and man, and expresses this faith in his life—that man, if he feel and think himself to be a Jew, is in the right; and he who possesses the faith and expresses it, but falters and hesitates as to what he is and where his religious home is—that man is in the wrong.

This quickening of the Jewish consciousness is one of the objects of our Union's existence and work. It has to be shown that even if the Unitarian or the Theist holds precisely the same beliefs as to the nature of God and man and their relations to each other which are held by the Jew, that is no reason whatever why we should falter in our allegiance to Judaism, or let the flame of our Jewish consciousness grow dim and flicker out. It is not for me to explain or defend the separate identity and the justified separate consciousness of those who hold the essence of the Jewish faith, but not the Jewish name; but it *is* for me to defend the retention of the Jewish name and the Jewish consciousness among those who hold, though even feebly and falteringly, the *essence* of the Jewish faith. It *is* for me, it is for this Union, to increase that faith—to quicken it, to intensify it. The faith and the Jewish consciousness of the faith have, as it were, to grow together in close and indissoluble union. The minimum of dogma, if that word be still employed, must and can provide a maximum of faith;

in combination with that Jewish consciousness through and with which it is held, it must and can produce a maximum of light and warmth and earnestness and intensity. Just because our Jewish faith in its abiding essence is not in conflict with history or science, must we make a determined effort to keep all waverers within our pale, to strengthen the weak, to encourage the slack; we must once more use, with different application, but with equal validity, the prophetic words: "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes."

XX

In spite of some disquieting symptoms to the contrary, it may nevertheless be rightly said that religious toleration is a characteristic of the age in which we live. Into the history and causes of this toleration this is not the place to enter. Like all good things, toleration has its defects or shadows; not all the causes which produce it are equally satisfactory. We may be tolerant of all religious opinions because we are indifferent equally to them all. Or, again, it is said sometimes: "Let us not exhibit our differences in public; let us have an outward standard of conformity; individually, in our own hearts and homes we may believe and do what we please." The false toleration which this saying implies leads to sore evils. It leads to hypocrisy and corruption, to outward conformity and inward unbelief, to a sort of official religion which does not truly correspond with the religion of its professed supporters. And sometimes, from a totally different point of view, men say: "All

religions are different modes of defining the Undefinable: they all seek a similar superhuman end by various means; the human tongues are many; the heavenly tongue is one; all religions mean much the same thing; the ultimate truth is removed from them all; as from infinity no finite length is nearer or more distant, so from that spiritual Infinite which we call God all our creeds and dogmas are equally removed." This saying is also objectionable, for we do *not* all mean the same thing, and we may rightly hold that even of our imperfect human creeds one is truer than the other.

There is another voice which is heard in our time, a voice of power and of truth, but yet also not without its dangers and its errors. For this voice says that the essence of true religion is morality. "We are agreed about righteousness and love: these are admitted by all as ends; we are agreed as to the hatefulness of cruelty, and avarice, and selfishness, and pride. And those who believe in God are agreed that he is righteousness and is served by righteousness. This is true religion; we need no more. This is the true and sufficient text; this is the Law and the Prophets and the Gospel. All the rest, that which distinguishes the Jew from the Christian, and the Churchman from the Dissenter, the Orthodox Jew from the Reform Jew, and

both from the Unitarian and the Theist, is mere commentary. Let those who care for their commentaries enjoy them, and wrangle over them, and fight for them; but we, and all other superior and sensible persons, will possess our souls in peace; we will live in a serener air; we will use our time and our thoughts in the service of man, which is the true worship of God. Good men of all religions are of one religion, and this one religion, the religion of all good men, is the only religion which matters, the only religion which is worth fighting for, the only religion which has never caused, and can never cause, waste and misery and strife, the only religion which makes for righteousness and pity and peace."

The elements of truth in these different pleas, and more especially in the last, we shall never let go. We shall, it is to be hoped, never again believe that moral goodness is less important than religious orthodoxy, or that all kinds of religious opinions may not produce and consort with noble lives, well-pleasing alike to God and to man. Yet for all that, we need not think, and we do not well to think, that differences of religious opinions are necessarily of little or no importance, or that we need not combine on the basis of avowed differences from others as well as upon the basis of conscious agree-

ment among ourselves. One of the religious problems of our time is how, and when, and for what, rightly to agree and rightly to differ; how, and when, and for what, rightly to proclaim our agreements and rightly to proclaim our differences. To our own Union the problem is perhaps specially important; upon us the solution of the problem is specially incumbent. Ours is a Union, a religious Union, and a Jewish Union; with whom, then, and for what are we united? From whom, and in what do we differ? My present sermon will be an attempt towards a consideration of some aspects of this problem.

One point seems clear. We differ sorrowfully; we agree with joy. But perhaps we do not always keep two other points sufficiently before us. As truth is a precious gift of God, and the attainment or search of it is an end in itself, we cannot rightly slur over or deny our differences. It is better to differ with honesty than falsely to agree. Thirdly, the joy of holding, finding, and sharing a truth should compensate for the sorrow of differing from those who do not believe that truth. In other words, the joy of union and agreement is greater than the sorrow of differing and severance.

Upon these assumptions I will now proceed. I want to show that we possess, as it were, widening circles of agreement, in all of

which we may rightly rejoice. We may be glad of our largest circle of agreement, which extends far beyond our own Jewish borders; but we may also be rightly glad of our smallest circle of agreement, that circle, namely, which is even smaller than our Jewish borders, and to some extent separates and marks us off from the rest of our brethren. We rejoice in the largest circle, and we rejoice in the smallest circle. The agreement of the smallest circle is, or may be, in some ways more intimate, more fervid, more personal than the agreement of the largest circle, and the joy of it may compensate for the differences which it implies. I want you to be keen about all your agreements, both in the biggest circle and in the smallest circle. Your keenness and joy in them all will give you the right broadness and tolerance and sanity on the one hand, the right avoidance of indifference and slipshod inaccuracy upon the other. I want to prevent the magnifying of differences, upon the one hand, but I want also to prevent the blurring and slurring of all distinctions and clearness of outline, upon the other. Vague and misty uniformity is about as bad as intolerant and inaccurate accentuation of differing and petty details.

There are four circles of agreement to which I would now direct your attention.

We will begin with the largest circle and end with the smallest.

The largest circle, then, is composed of those who, in one form or another, accept the teaching of the Hebrew prophets that religion and morality are inseparably welded and wedded together. It is composed of those who believe in God, and who hold that God is supreme righteousness, and that righteousness is his imitation and his service. It is composed of those who believe that there is such a thing as goodness, and that there is such a thing as sin; and of those who hold that, in spite of our theological differences, we are all children of the one divine Father, who is the source of righteousness and the author of truth. Let us rejoice that we belong to this great company of believers, to this great army of worshippers, albeit they worship in so many different tongues and with so many varying forms. Let us be strengthened by this agreement; let us be cheered by it. For this agreement is also, as we think, the partial triumph of Judaism, the partial triumph of our cause. Let us consciously and joyously share in this unity, rejoicing that our agreements are greater than our differences, our achievements greater than our failures, our triumphs —the triumphs of true religion—greater than its defects. Let us claim our active and

personal share and acknowledgment in this unity by every honest fight with temptation, by every victorious wrestle with sin; let us vindicate and prove our right to be a member of this great army of united and agreeing brothers in faith—whether they call themselves Jews or Christians, or any other name—by every deed of self-sacrifice, by every earnest moment of communion with God, by every thought of purity, by every labour of unselfishness and love offered up in the common service of man and in the common worship of God.

And now I will speak of a smaller circle of agreement, of a circle which is real and important for us in England, and important, in greater or lesser degree, for all the communities of the West. It is the circle composed of all those who accept and cherish our simple but sublime Unitarian doctrine, the pure Fatherhood of God. Jews, Unitarians, and Theists compose this circle, but there are thousands more who are sincerely with us to-day, though officially they may not call themselves by one of these three names. And we, the Jewish segment of this circle, must not always seek to discover and emphasise wherein we differ from the two other segments—our partners and companions in a holy bond,—but we must also consider, acknowledge, and rejoice in our agreements.

Sometimes, indeed, it seems to us as if it would be all so much easier and nicer if there were no agreements as well as differences, if outside and beyond ourselves, who are Jews, there were nothing but most mediæval Christians, rigid Trinitarians, rigid believers in the most antiquated conception of the Atonement, in the most offensive conception of Hell, in the most immoral conception of justification by faith; and so on throughout the whole gamut of dogma. We sometimes tend to forget the progress of religious thought, and unhistorically and inaccurately we sometimes speak as if the Christian world all thought alike upon these subjects, and as if all their thought were the greatest conceivable antithesis to *our* thought, to the doctrines of Judaism.

One can see the motives for these inaccuracies. One motive is to magnify our own excellences by using our neighbours' errors as a foil; and another motive is to stimulate the slack, and to keep the true believers keen, by representing the differences between them and all the outside world in the whitest and crudest light. Yet a religious end hardly justifies inaccurate means. In any case, let us sometimes, and for certain purposes, look at the matter from the very opposite point of view. Let us rejoice in our agreements rather than always search for and

magnify our differences; let us rejoice in the yet further triumph of our cause,—the cause of Amos and Isaiah; let us rejoice in the goodly and growing regiment of those who, though with differences of accent, of history, and even of affection, combine in the common confession of the perfect Unity of God.

And now we come to the third of our concentric circles, which is composed of our own community only. Here too we have a special agreement, and yet here too there are differences between those who think as all our grandfathers thought and those who think as some of us think to-day. But let us first, while we look upon the third circle, consider and take stock of our agreements. For though we need not and should not ignore the development of belief outside our own ranks, we need none the less ignore our own special agreements. These agreements are not merely expressed in cut-and-dry doctrines which others can believe and proclaim as well as we; there are also agreements of accent, of history, of consecration. We are united by a common and striking past, by partnership in the martyrdoms of the past and in the martyrdoms of the present, by a common aspiration, and above all by a common mission, a common charge. We have as binding

links to keep us together the unity of common fundamental doctrines, lit up by a common history, and consecrated by the martyr's blood which has flowed for two thousand years. We have the unity of a mission which is very far from being fulfilled. It will not be best fulfilled by throwing away as idle and unnecessary every historic setting, every historic memory. Just as in the Empire of Britain there is room and place, purpose and value, for the patriotisms and for the speech, for the hallowed memories and special hopes, of many different races and peoples, so within the larger band of all who profess the Theistic and Unitarian dogma there is room and place, there is purpose and value, for special communities, with their own different histories, their special embodiments, their special memories and hopes, even their special accents and ceremonies; above all, their special missions and vocations. A dull uniformity is not required, and would defeat its own aims. A surrender of our historic separateness, our separate identity, would do an ill turn, an evil service, to the cause of Theism and the Unitarian creed. We shall not refuse to recognise our spiritual kinship and partnership with those who compose the second circle—we shall claim our place in it among them—but we shall also not obliterate the

fair and clear circumference of our own circle, and we shall be true to our special mission and our historic faith.

Lastly, I come to the smallest circle of the four. It is the circle composed of those who, within the limits of Judaism, occupy the liberal position and maintain the liberal point of view. And here I differ from those who say that within the one larger circle of Judaism there are no distinct smaller circles and parties, but only an endless variety of individual opinions. I differ from those who think that this Union can only be a Union for worship, but that it cannot be a special home, a special bond, for those who form a distinct religious group or circle among themselves. I fully admit that the shades of religious differences, the *nuances* and varieties of religious opinion, are almost infinite; but nevertheless I do not think that within the one larger Jewish community there need be nothing but the extremist individualism. No one, at this time of day, would wish to tie down the free movement of thought, the unfettered liberty of the individual conscience, by any new authoritative creed, by any fresh official bundle of dogmas. But there are tendencies and even parties in religion, as there are tendencies and even parties in politics. There is room in Judaism, there actually

exists in Judaism (for all who have eyes to see), two main tendencies, two main parties. We may call them the conservatives and the liberals; or if we prefer the terms, the traditionalists and the progressists. These two sets of distinguishing words seem to me better and truer than the old catchwords of orthodox and reformers. Now these two parties can each respect the other, each can recognise the measure of agreement which unites them, in spite of differences, within the larger circle of Judaism; but yet each party can also recognise the measure of difference as well as the measure of agreement; and above all—and on this I lay most earnest stress —each can rejoice in the special truths and views wherein they severally differ, as well as in the common truths and views wherein they agree. The liberals, or progressists, are united by their common belief in the principles of religious development and of religious liberty. They are united by a common belief in the validity and justification of the application of these principles in the field of Bible interpretation and criticism, in public worship, in outward ceremonial. The traditionalists are united by the common belief that God has for all time revealed his will in a perfect, immutable, and obligatory divine law. The

liberals are united by the common belief that God has progressively revealed his will, but that no Book or Code is wholly divine, wholly perfect, or wholly obligatory. The one party receives the Book as a thing given, to be obeyed as a whole, defended as a whole, in humble subjection and absolute acceptance; the other party brings the Book, as all other products of the human spirit, even though guided and illumined by the divine spirit, before the bar of reason. What reason tells them is good and true in doctrine they reverently accept; what reason tells them is right and desirable in practice they advocate and perform.

There are those who attempt to mediate between the two, as they call them, extreme positions, who seek to combine a little of the liberty of the progressists, upon the one hand, with a little of the bondage of the traditionalists upon the other. These mediators may be honest, but they will infallibly fall between two stools. The advancing tide of thought, with a fuller clearness of vision, will sweep them away. But we, my friends, shall not be swept away. We have principles to cleave to, and through them we shall be strong. To halt between two opinions will avail men little. Let them clearly sing the old song or clearly sing the new. And just as I asked you to recognise

your agreements, so I ask you to recognise your differences. Each of the four circles is a real and true circle. Stand by them all. Remember that every agreement posits a difference and every difference an agreement. The largest circle separates us from those outside it as well as unites us to those within it. And so with all the other circles. They constitute differences, but they also constitute unions. The smaller the unions, the more definite their obligations, the more insistent the duties which those who form them must discharge. To our common Judaism we have obligations and duties, but I ask those who think with me not only to acknowledge these, but also the special obligations and duties towards our liberal hope, our liberal purpose, our large and liberal faith. Stand fast, then, and rejoice in the truths and the aspirations which all our four circles symbolise ; be keen, be eager about them all.

THE END

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